DRAMATIZED STORIES *from the* OLD TESTAMENT

HARRY W. GITHENS

Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
presented by

MRS. J. LEE LEWIS

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

X 176
G447d

To my dear friend
Lee.
Compliments of the Author
"Harry"

Lee Lewis

Dramatized Stories from the Old Testament

G447d

Dramatized Stories

FROM THE

Old Testament

BY

HARRY W. GITHENS

TC

Drama, religious

Plays and pageants. Bible plays

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DEDICATION

To the young people, everywhere, who
are striving to promote the King-
dom of God by loyal service in
their local churches, this
book is affectionate-
ly dedicated.

—*Harry W. Githens.*

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CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE 11

INTRODUCTION 13

STORY 1.

A FATHER OF NATIONS 15

STORY 2.

SEARCHING FOR A WIFE 23

STORY 3.

A BAD BARGAIN 30

STORY 4.

A LONG COURTSHIP 36

STORY 5.

THE COAT OF MANY COLORS 42

STORY 6.

A PRISONER PROMOTED 52

STORY 7.

SAVED TO SERVE 58

STORY 8.

AN ADOPTED SON 67

STORY 9.

From Palace to Prairie 75

STORY 10.

Delivered from Bondage 83

STORY 11.

The Golden Calf 89

STORY 12.

A Rash Vow 100

STORY 13.

A Faithful Daughter 110

STORY 14.

A Mother's Gift 115

STORY 15.

The Shepherd King 121

STORY 16.

A Giant Story 131

STORY 17.

A Wise King 138

STORY 18.

A Captive Maid 146

STORY 19.

A Woman Who Dared.....154

STORY 20.

An Interpreter of Dreams.....164

STORY 21.

The Fiery Furnace.....172

STORY 22.

The Handwriting on the Wall.....179

STORY 23.

A Persecuted Prophet.....18[illegible]

STORY 24.

A Fish Story.....195

PREFACE

THESE short, dramatized stories are suitable for use on various occasions. They may be presented at the Bible-class lesson hour, or at a Bible-class social, at a C. E. devotional service, at mid-week church night, at a vesper service, at a missionary meeting, or used for a feature in the opening worship program of the Bible school.

They are suitable for use in connection with a morning or evening church service, or may be given as a Sunday evening series. They can be effectively used by training-classes and in summer camps of young people.

INTRODUCTION

IN the preparation of this volume, it has been the purpose of the author to present an accurate interpretation of the Scripture story, strengthened by imaginary dialogue of "what probably happened" during the intervals not recorded in the Bible.

These dramatizations have been made as simple as possible, while at the same time have been introduced practically all of the important characters recorded in the Scriptural story. The words, for the most part, have been taken directly from the Bible narrative, so that the actors will be learning Scripture as well as a story.

In recent years the drama has found a definite place in the special programs of the church. It is a means of drawing into the church many people who are not attracted by the regular services. Not only do dramatics appeal to the young people, but they afford an opportunity for the church to use her young life. When young people are given something interesting to do in the church, their interest is correspondingly increased.

Costumes.

Costuming is a simple matter, but careful detail will add much to the effect. Oriental garments for both men and women were loose-flowing robes. Dressing-gowns, lounging-robes, capes, shawls, trimmed with strips of bright-colored cheese-cloth, make splendid costumes. Study Bible pictures and library books carefully.

Platform Settings.

Screens, draperies and plants can be used for scenery. Wallboard can be used for the construction of houses and city walls. Chairs and benches may be covered with Oriental draperies for seats. White canvas thrown over a stack of chairs will represent a rock. Palms and ferns and other shrubbery can be used for out-of-door scenes.

Lighting.

The lights in the auditorium may be dimmed and a spotlight effect used where it will enhance the picturesqueness. When lighting effects are sought, they must be tried out beforehand, and are usually safest when in charge of one person.

Director.

One person should be in charge and made responsible for the success of the presentation. This person may use various groups within the church, asking the C. E. or an organized class to present the drama, or talent from these may be combined.

All speakers and readers should be trained to enunciate clearly, to speak slowly, and, as needs demand, dramatically.

Dramatized Stories from the Old Testament

STORY 1

A FATHER OF NATIONS

(Time for presentation, twenty minutes.)

CHARACTERS.

ABRAHAM—A Friend of God.
SARAH—His Wife.
LOT—His Nephew.
ISAAC—His Son.
THREE TRAVELERS.
ANGEL OF THE LORD.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—Abram's camp near Bethel; Abram and Lot separate.

SCENE II.—An altar in Hebron; God encourages Abram.

SCENE III.—A camp in Canaan, twenty-four years later; names are changed.

SCENE IV.—The same, some weeks later; Abraham entertains strangers.

SCENE V.—The same, fourteen years later; an unusual command.

SCENE VI.—An altar on Mt. Moriah; a trial of faith.

COSTUMES.

ABRAHAM—An old man with white hair and beard. Flowing robe of white, with mantle (overdrapery) of brighter color.

SARAH—Woman of advanced years. Full gown of dark material.

LOT—A young man. Costume similar to Abraham.

ISAAC—A lad of about thirteen years. Tunic of tan-colored toweling, without sleeves, and reaching to knees; dark hair; sandals.

TRAVELERS—Flowing robes of white, with bright mantles, and beards.

ANGEL—Customary robe of white, with wings.

(NOTE—The long messages of the angel may be read by some one behind the curtain, if desired.)

SCENE I.—ABRAM'S CAMP NEAR BETHEL.

(Tent at rear right, with palm-trees behind it. Trees also at left and well near by. The tent should be made of striped canvas, if possible, with porch effect over doorway. Electric fan off stage will give suggestion of a breeze. Sarai is seated in door of tent. Abram and Lot enter from opposite sides.)

Lot—Ho, Abram, my uncle! [They greet by placing heads on each other's shoulders.] Many weeks have passed since we returned from Egypt, and we have become very rich in cattle and silver and gold. Verily, our flocks and herds have increased so that the land is not able to sustain them. Therefore, what shall we do?

Abram (nodding)—Verily, the thing is known to me, and to-day I have heard that there is strife be-

tween thy herdsmen and my herdsmen, and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwell in the land. But let there be no strife, I pray thee, for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or, if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

Lot (looking off over the country)—Thou art indeed kind unto me, my uncle. I see below me the plain of Jordan, with its many streams of water, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord. I will remove thence and thou shalt dwell in the land of Canaan.

Abram—Thou hast chosen well, my son. Therefore will we separate here, to go our ways, and may the Lord bring blessings upon thee. (Salute as before; exit Lot.)

Angel (appearing)—Lift up now thine eyes and look toward the northward, the southward, the eastward and the westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. (Vanishes.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—AN ALTAR IN HEBRON.

(Arrange this in front of a drop curtain placed in front of Scene I. Altar is made of stones, upon which a pile of brush is arranged. Red-light powder will give appearance of burning sacrifice. Stage is dark, except for the altar fire. Abram kneels by the altar.)

Angel (appearing at right)—Fear not, Abram, for I am thy shield and thine exceeding great reward.

Abram—Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, for thou hast given to me no seed?

Angel—Look now toward heaven, and see if thou canst number the stars.

Abram—Nay, they are too great for numbering.

Angel—So shall thy seed be. I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

But thy seed shall be strangers in a land that is not theirs and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years.

And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

And unto thy seed will I give this land, from the river of Egypt, unto the river Euphrates.

And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. (Vanishes.)

Abram—Blessed be the Lord God of Israel. (Rises.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—ABRAM'S CAMP IN CANAAN, TWENTY-FOUR YEARS LATER.

(Arrange similar to Scene I., but Sarai is not present. Abram is seated in door of tent, when angel appears opposite him.)

Angel—I am the angel of the almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make a covenant between thee and me, and wilt multiply thee exceedingly. [Abram bows his face to ground.]

Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but it shall be Abraham, for a father of many nations have I made thee.

And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thy people.

And I will establish my covenant between thee and me, and thy seed after thee, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

And I will give unto thee and to thy seed the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession.

And Sarai, thy wife, shall now be called Sarah; and I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her; and she shall be a mother of nations. And thou shalt call thy son Isaac.

And as for Ishmael, thy son of the Egyptian Hagar, behold, I have blessed him also, and will multiply him exceedingly.

But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this time next year. (Vanishes.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE IV.—THE SAME, SEVERAL WEEKS LATER.

(Abraham is seated in doorway of tent when three travelers appear.)

Abraham (running to meet them, bows face to ground)—My lords, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant. But let me fetch water and wash your feet, while ye rest yourselves under the tree. And I will fetch bread and meat, after which ye may pass on. (Rises.)

Traveler—So do, as thou hast said.

(The angels talk together in pantomime, while Abraham goes to tent.)

Abraham (calling)—Sarah! [She appears.] Make ready some bread and meat and milk, for strangers have come unto our tent.

(She disappears into tent, followed by Abraham, who returns immediately with bowl of water and a towel.)

Abraham (to travelers)—Come, now, and sit beneath the tree, while I wash the dust of travel from your feet.

(They sit and he removes their sandals, washes feet quickly and dries them. Allow time for this, as it pictures an old Oriental custom. They meanwhile may talk about their travels, crops, or any other appropriate subject, if desired.)

Angel (at conclusion of washing)—Where is Sarah, thy wife?

Abraham—She is in the tent.

Angel—Verily, I will return to thee according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

Abraham—Shall I indeed have a son in mine old age?

Angel—Is anything too hard for the Lord? Now, behold, we continue our journey, and thou shalt abide in peace. (Exit.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE V.—THE SAME, FOURTEEN YEARS LATER.

(Abraham is seated in doorway of tent.)

Angel (appearing)—Abraham, my servant.

Abraham (looking up)—Behold, here I am.

Angel—Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

(Abraham falls upon his face to worship.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE VI.—AN ALTAR ON MT. MORIAH.

(Arranged similar to other altar, but there is no wood upon it. Abraham and Isaac enter from left, the latter having a bundle of wood upon his back.)

Abraham—Behold, Isaac, my son, this is the place unto which the Lord hath called us. Here will I offer a sacrifice unto Him.

Isaac (as they place wood upon the altar)—Verily, my father, we have the wood and the fire, but where is the lamb?

Abraham—Lo, God will provide Himself a lamb for the offering.

Isaac—Yea, all things are possible with Him, for He is a mighty God, and we must follow Him faithfully.

(Abraham binds Isaac's arms and feet and places him upon the altar.)

Isaac—What is this that ye do unto me, my father?

Abraham—I but obey the command of God. He will bless thee. (Draws knife and is about to slay Isaac when the angel appears.)

Angel—Ho! Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any harm unto him, for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thine only son. And because thou hast done this

thing I will bless thee, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. (Vanishes.)

Abraham (as he unbinds Isaac)—Look! yonder in the thicket is a ram, caught by his horns. We will fetch him for the offering. (They exit.)

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 2

SEARCHING FOR A WIFE

CHARACTERS.

ABRAHAM—A Father of Israel.
ISAAC—Abraham's Son.
ELIEZER—Abraham's Servant.
REBEKAH—A Maiden of Mesopotamia.
BETHUEL—Her Father.
LABAN—Her Brother.
TWO SERVANTS with Eliezer.
THREE WOMEN at the Well.
TWO MAIDS for Rebekah.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—In front of Abraham's tent in Canaan; a great mission.

SCENE II.—By a well near Nahor; Jehovah guides Eliezer.

SCENE III.—At the tent of Bethuel; a willing bride.

SCENE IV.—By a well in Canaan; Isaac meets Rebekah.

COSTUMES.

ABRAHAM—An old man with white hair and beard. Flowing robe of white, with mantle of dark cloth. Head-dress of bright material, which falls over shoulders, being held in place by a band or cord.

Isaac—A young man. Wears tunic of tan or white, reaching to knees and without sleeves; scarf over shoulders is brought down to make a girdle; head-covering similar to Abraham's; sandals.

Eliezer—Man of middle age. Costume similar to Isaac's, but longer; dark hair and beard; carries staff on his journey.

Rebekah—A young woman. Wears flowing robe of bright cloth, with scarf over head; many strings of beads and jewels; veil to drop over face when she meets Isaac.

Bethuel—Costume similar to Abraham's.

Laban—Costume similar to Isaac's.

Servants—Young men. Costumes similar to Eliezer's.

Women—Costumes similar to Rebekah's.

Scene I.—In Front of a Tent.

(Abraham is seated, talking with Isaac. Group of palms may be arranged behind the tent and also at opposite side. Electric fan off stage will give suggestion of a breeze.)

Abraham—The years of my life have been many, but through them all the Lord hath blessed me. Now I know that my days can not be long in this land, and before I leave I would find a wife for thee.

Isaac—There are many beautiful daughters in the camps round about us. Will they not satisfy thee?

Abraham—Verily, all around us are the women of Canaan, but my son's wife must be of our own people, and yet there are no maidens of Israel near. I must have help in this matter. Ho, Eliezer!

Eliezer (coming from tent)—How can I serve thee, my master?

Abraham—Long hast thou been my servant and thou hast been most trustworthy. Now I would give to thee a matter of great importance. Isaac must have a wife, and, as I am too old to seek for her, thou must do it for me.

Eliezer—Where shall I seek her—among the women of Canaan?

Abraham (shaking his head)—Not there. Promise me by the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, that thou wilt not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom we dwell.

Eliezer—Where, then, shall I seek her?

Abraham—I would have thee go unto my country and to my kindred, and there find an Israelitish maiden.

Eliezer—But suppose the woman will not be willing to follow me into this land; what shall I do then?

Abraham—The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, saying, "Unto thy children will I give this land," He will send His angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife for my son from thence. If the woman be not willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be free from thy promise.

Eliezer—This is a serious matter, but I will promise thee. [Looking toward heaven.] The Lord help me in my task. I will prepare the camels for the journey and the gifts for the maiden. It is a long way to Mesopotamia, but I will obey thy bidding. (Exit.)

[CURTAIN.]

Scene II.—By a Well near Nahor.

(Plain blue back-drop or country scene. Arrange this in front of Scene I., which need not be disturbed. Place a well near center. Palms may be used at back right and left. An electric fan for breeze. Eliezer enters at right, followed by his servants, each with a staff and appearing travel-worn. One of the servants carries a box of gifts. Servants stand in background.)

Eliezer (sitting by a tree)—At last I am in Mesopotamia. It was a long journey, and many times my courage seemed to fail me. And now that I am here, I know not how to find the maid. [Kneels and prays.] O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray Thee send me help this day. Behold, I stand here by the well and the daughters of the city come to draw water. Let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say, "Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink," and she shall say, "Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also," let the same be the maiden that Thou hast appointed for Thy servant. (Arises.)

(Several young women come at intervals to draw water. Eliezer speaks to each one, "Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink," but each hurries on unheeding, until Rebekah comes.)

Rebekah—Drink, my lord. [He drinks from pitcher.] And I will draw water for thy camels also.

Eliezer—Tell me first whose daughter thou art.

Rebekah—I am the daughter of Bethuel, in Nahor.

Eliezer—Thou art both kind and fair. Take these gifts. [Offers beads and scarfs from box which servant brings forward.] Is there room in thy father's tent for us to lodge?

Rebekah (nodding)—We have both straw and provender and room in which to lodge.

Eliezer—Go, tell thy father that my master Abraham hath sent me hither and I would see him. (Exit Rebekah.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—AT THE TENT OF BETHUEL.

(Use same setting as Scene I., with slight changes. Water-jars are grouped at side of tent. Rebekah and Bethuel stand in doorway. Laban enters from opposite side with Eliezer.)

Laban—Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, for I have prepared a room for thee and also shelter for the camels. [Introduces Rebekah and Bethuel.] Behold, my father Bethuel, and Rebekah, my sister, whom thou didst meet by the well.

(Servant comes from tent with tray of food.)

Eliezer (shaking head)—I will not eat until I have told my errand. I am the servant of Abraham in Canaan. The Lord hath blessed my master greatly and hath given him great possessions of flocks, of herds, of silver and of gold. He hath one greatly beloved son, Isaac, unto whom he hath given all his wealth. My master hath sent me to this land of his kindred to find a wife for Isaac, lest he be tempted to marry one of the women of Canaan. I came this day unto the well, and as I stood there I prayed: "O Lord, let it come to pass that when a maiden cometh forth to draw water and I shall say unto her, 'Give me, I pray thee, a little water from thy pitcher that I may drink,' and she say unto me, 'Drink, thou, and I will draw water for thy

camels also,' let the same be the one thou hast appointed for my master's son." As I finished praying, Rebekah came unto the well and said even the words that I had asked of the Lord. And when she told me that she was the daughter of Bethuel, I knew that I had come to the right place. Tell me now if ye will deal kindly with my master, and, if not, tell me, that I may seek farther.

Bethuel—The thing cometh from the Lord.

Laban—We can not speak unto thee bad or good.

Bethuel—Behold, Rebekah is here before thee. [Turns to her.] Wilt thou go with this man?

Rebekah (nodding)—I will go.

Bethuel (to Eliezer)—Take her and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife. May Jehovah bless thee and keep thee.

Eliezer—God hath answered my prayer and that of my master. Come, now, let us eat and be merry. Then we must return to Canaan. (They sit in front of tent on cushions and rugs.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE IV.—BY A WELL IN CANAAN.

(Arranged similar to Scene II., with well in different position. The well should be square, and not more than a foot high, the sides painted to represent bricks. Eliezer enters from left, followed by Rebekah and her maids at a distance.)

Rebekah (looking right)—What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us?

Eliezer—It is my master. [Rebekah covers face with veil.] All hail to thee, Isaac, son of Abraham.

Isaac (entering)—Welcome home again to the tents of thy master. Lo, Eliezer, thou art a brave and trusted servant.

Eliezer—Behold, the journey upon which thy father didst send me is now completed. Verily, it was a long journey, but the God of my master hath guided me and blessed me. Behold the maiden Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel, who has come to be thy wife. (Leads her forward.)

(Rebekah kneels before Isaac, with her hand in his.)

Isaac—Come, let us go into the tent of my father Abraham and my mother Sarah.

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 3

A BAD BARGAIN

CHARACTERS.

ISAAC—An Israelite.
REBEKAH—Isaac's Wife.
JACOB } Their Sons.
ESAU }

SCENES.

SCENE I.—In the house of Isaac; Esau sells his birthright.

SCENE II.—The same, several years later; Rebekah's plot.

SCENE III.—The same, next day; Jacob deceives Isaac.

COSTUMES.

ISAAC—An old man with heavy, white hair and beard. Wears flowing robe of dark cloth, with overdrapery of contrasting color.

REBEKAH—An old woman, with flowing robe of dark cloth; scarf over head.

JACOB AND ESAU—Young men, wearing tunics of knee length, with overdrapery of dark cloth around shoulders. Esau has hairy skin and short, dark beard. Jacob has smooth skin and fair features.

SCENE I.—A ROOM IN THE HOME OF ISAAC.

(It is a small room, with plastered walls. Coarse draperies over door. The windows are small and latticed. Water-jars in corners. There is an Oriental table in center, and several chairs and benches. Jacob is seated at table, eating pottage.)

Jacob (as Esau enters, wearily)—Ho, brother Esau, thou dost indeed have a weary look from thy wanderings in the field.

Esau (sinking into a chair)—Thou hast rightly spoken, my brother. Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage, for I am faint.

Jacob—Wilt thou sell me this day thy birthright?

Esau (after hesitating a moment)—Behold, I am at the point to die, because of mine hunger and the weariness of my body. Therefore, what profit shall this birthright be to me?

Jacob (lifting his hand)—Wilt thou swear unto me this day that thou wilt give unto me thy birthright?

Esau (lifting his hand)—By this sign I do give unto thee my birthright, brother Jacob. (Jacob passes dish of pottage to Esau, who eats greedily.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—THE SAME, SOME YEARS LATER.

(Isaac is seated. Rebekah can be seen moving around, through door at back center. Esau enters left, humming. Isaac is old and blind.)

Isaac (hearing Esau)—Esau, my son.

Esau (standing beside his father)—Behold, here am I.

Isaac—Behold, now I am old, and know not the day of my death. Therefore, take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison. And make me savory meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat, and that I may bless thee before I die.

Esau—Verily, I shall do as thou dost bid me, my father. Come now with me, and sit outside the door where the wind bloweth cool. (Takes Isaac by the arm and leads him out.)

(Jacob enters from door at right and flings himself upon the couch.)

Rebekah (entering and speaking cautiously)—Jacob, my beloved son, behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau, thy brother, saying: "Bring me venison and make me savory meat that I may eat, and bless thee before the Lord before my death." Therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee. Go, now, to the flock and fetch me two good kids of the goats, and I will make them into savory meat for thy father, such as he loveth. And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.

Jacob—Yea, but Esau is a hairy man and I am a smooth man. [Holds up his bare arms.] Peradventure my father will feel of my skin and I shall seem to him as a deceiver, and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing.

Rebekah—Upon me be thy curse, my son. Only obey my voice, and go fetch me them.

Jacob (going)—I will obey thy commands, my mother.

[CURTAIN.]

Scene III.—The Same, Next Day.

(Rebekah is binding the arms and neck of Jacob with pieces of fur.)

Rebekah—Aha! thou dost indeed resemble now thy brother Esau, for, behold, I have put his raiment upon thee, and thine arms and neck are now hairy like unto his. [Stops and listens.] Hist! Methinks I hear now the approach of thy father. [Runs off right, returning immediately with bowl of meat.] Here is the meat which I have prepared from the kids thou didst bring from the flock, and there is bread also. Give it now unto thy father. (Runs off.)

Jacob (as Isaac slowly enters on his staff, feeling his way along)—My father! (Assists him to a chair.)

Isaac—Who art thou?

Jacob—I am Esau, thy first-born. I have done according as thou didst command me. Come, I pray thee, and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.

Isaac—How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son?

Jacob—Because the Lord, thy God, brought it to me.

Isaac—Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel of thy skin, so that I may know whether thou art my very son Esau, or not. [Jacob kneels before Isaac, timidly.] The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. Art thou my very son Esau?

Jacob—I am.

Isaac—Bring it now, and I will eat of the venison, that my soul may bless thee. [He eats, while Jacob stands by and watches.] Come near, now, and kiss me, my son. [Jacob obeys; Isaac smells Jacob's clothes.] See, the smell of thy clothes is as the smell of a field

which the Lord hath blessed. [Jacob kneels again, and Isaac places his hands upon his head.] Therefore, God give thee of the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Let people serve thee and nations bow down to thee. Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.

Jacob (rising)—Thou art indeed merciful to thy son. But I must now hasten on errands for my mother, who doth labor diligently for her household. (Exit right.)

Esau (entering left, with bow and arrow and bowl of meat)—All hail to thee, my father, for I have obeyed thy commands. Arise, now, and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.

Isaac—Who art thou?

Esau—I am thy first-born son Esau.

Isaac (trembling excitedly)—Who? Where, then, is he that hath made venison and brought it to me, and I have eaten before thou didst come, and have blessed him?

Esau (placing bowl on table and falling before Isaac)—Bless me, even me also, my father!

Isaac—Thy brother came with cunning plans and hath taken away thy blessing.

Esau—Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright, and now he hath taken away my blessing. But hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

Isaac—Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants. And with corn and wine have I sustained him. What shall I do now unto thee, my son?

Esau—Hast thou but one blessing, my father? [Wails.] Bless me, even me also, O my father!

Isaac (placing hands upon Esau's head)—Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above. And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shall serve thy brother. And it shall come to pass that, when thou shalt have the dominion, thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck. (Esau rises.)

Esau (aside)—Behold, the days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob. [Assists Isaac to rise.] Come, let us go again outside the house, where the wind bloweth cool. (Both exit left. Rebekah enters at back door and Jacob from right.)

Rebekah (cautiously)—Behold, I have stood outside the door and have heard the return of Esau, thy brother. He is angered because thou hast deceived thy father, and doth purpose to kill thee. Therefore, my son, arise and flee to Laban, my brother, in Haran, and tarry with him for a few days until thy brother's fury turn away, and he shall forget what thou hast done to him. Then I will send and fetch thee.

Jacob (nodding)—Again will I obey thy voice, my mother. (Both exit right.)

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 4

A LONG COURTSHIP

CHARACTERS.

JACOB—An Israelite.
LABAN—Jacob's Uncle.
LEAH, RACHEL } Laban's Daughters.
TWO SHEPHERDS.
SEVERAL ANGELS.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—The desert; Jacob's dream.

SCENE II.—A well near Haran; Jacob meets Rachel.

SCENE III.—In front of Laban's tent; Leah given to Jacob.

SCENE IV.—The same, seven years later; Jacob wins Rachel.

COSTUMES.

JACOB—In first two scenes he is a young man, without beard. Wears a tunic of brown toweling, with overdrapery of bright cloth; bare legs and sandals. In last two scenes he has overdraperies of different colors, and also a short, dark beard.

LABAN—An older man, with white hair and beard. Flowing robe of white, with overdrapery of bright cloth. A square of bright cloth is tied around his head, falling back on shoulders.

Leah and Rachel—Loose-flowing robes of bright colors, with scarfs over heads.

Shepherds—Young men, with tunics of tan toweling; bare legs and sandals; capes falling over shoulders; have shepherds' crooks.

Scene I.—In the Desert.

(Fading light to indicate sunset; palms at right and left; several stones, made of sacks filled with sawdust, scattered around. Jacob enters from right with staff.)

Jacob—Verily, the journey from the home of my father and mother hath been a long one, and the heat of the day hath made me weary indeed. Now the night cometh and I must prepare for sleep.

(He selects a large stone for a pillow and lies down in the increasing darkness. A ladder, built like stairsteps, is brought into place at back center, and several angels stand thereon; spotlight on them. Soft music while Jacob sleeps.)

Angel (at top)—I am the angel of the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the east, and to the west, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. (Darkness again, while ladder is removed.)

Jacob (awakening, as light returns)—Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not. [Appears

frightened.] How dreadful is this place! It is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. [Piles up stones for an altar and pours oil from his flask upon them.] Behold, I will build here an altar and call this place Bethel. If God will be with me and keep me in the way that I go, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God. And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house. [Looks toward heaven.] And of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth to Thee.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—BY A WELL NEAR HARAN.

(Use same setting as before, with well placed in center. The well should be square and about a foot high, painted to represent bricks. Electric fan off stage will give suggestion of a breeze. Two shepherds are drawing water. Jacob enters right.)

Jacob (bowing)—Brethren, where are ye from?

Shepherd—We are come out of Haran.

Jacob—Know ye Laban, the son of Nahor?

Shepherd—Verily, we know him.

Jacob—Is he well?

Shepherd—Yea, he is well, and, behold [looks off left], his daughter Rachel cometh with the sheep. (Shepherds exit right.)

Jacob (meeting Rachel, who enters left)—The blessing of Jehovah, God of heaven and earth, be upon thee, fair daughter of Laban. [Bows on one knee.] Knowest thou also that thy father is brother of my mother Rebekah? (Rises.)

Rachel—Welcome, then, into the land of thy people. [Looking back left.] Behold, my father cometh after us. [Laban enters left.] Come, my father, and greet Jacob, son of thy sister Rebekah, who hath entered into our country.

Laban (embracing and kissing Jacob)—Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. Come, and abide with me.

Jacob—Verily, I will come and be thy servant.

Laban—Because thou art my nephew, shouldst thou therefore serve me for naught? Tell me, what shall thy wages be?

Jacob—I will serve thee seven years for Rachel, thy daughter.

Laban—But I also have an elder daughter, Leah, who abideth now in the household. However, it is better that I give Rachel to thee, even though she is the younger, than that I should give her to another man. Abide with me. (They go.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—IN FRONT OF LABAN'S TENT, SEVEN YEARS LATER.

(Use same scene as Scene I., with tent placed at one side. It should be made of striped canvas, if possible, with porch effect in front; electric fan to give suggestion of a breeze. Laban is seated in doorway.)

Jacob (entering from left)—Behold, O my Uncle Laban, the seven years which I have served thee are now fulfilled. But they have seemed like only a few days to me because of my love for Rachel. I pray thee now that thou wilt give me my wife, so that I may marry her.

Laban—Verily, thou hast been a faithful suitor, and thy labor shall be rewarded. [Goes into tent. Jacob paces to and fro. Presently Laban returns with Leah, her face covered with a veil.] Unto thee do I now give this, my daughter, and may Jehovah bless thee and keep thee throughout all thy days. [He places Leah's hand in Jacob's and then raises his arms over their heads in blessing.] Take her now to be thy wife. (Leah removes her veil.)

Jacob (observing her)—What is this thou hast done unto me? Did I not serve with thee for Rachel? Wherefore, then, hast thou beguiled me?

Laban—It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the first-born. Fulfill thy obligation to her and then will I give thee Rachel also for the service which thou shalt render with me yet seven other years.

Jacob—Verily, even another seven years will I serve thee for her.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE IV.—THE SAME, SEVEN YEARS LATER.

(Laban seated in doorway of tent.)

Jacob (entering)—Behold, O my master, the seven years which I have again served thee for Rachel are now fulfilled. I pray thee that thou wilt keep thy promise and give her unto me for my wife.

Laban (rising)—As thou hast kept thy promise, even so will I keep my promise with thee. [Goes into tent, returning presently with Rachel, her face covered with a veil.] Unto thee, Jacob, do I now give this, my daughter Rachel, to be thy wife [raises arms in bless-

ing], and may Jehovah bless thee and keep thee throughout all thy days. (Rachel removes veil.)

Jacob (embracing Rachel)—Come unto me, beloved. Yea, I will serve seven years more to prove my love for thee.

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 5

THE COAT OF MANY COLORS

CHARACTERS.

JACOB—A Father of Israel.
JOSEPH—His Favored Son.
SIX OTHER SONS.
THREE ISHMAELITES.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—In the home of Jacob; a father's gift.
SCENE II.—On the plain of Dothan; rough treatment.

COSTUMES.

JACOB—An old man with long, white hair and beard. Flowing robe of white, with overdrapery of dark blue.

JOSEPH—A lad of about seventeen, with tunic of tan toweling and overdrapery of red and blue; bare legs and sandals; carries a shepherd's crook in Scene II.

THE OTHER SONS—Costumes similar to Joseph's, but longer. They all wear dark beards of various length.

ISHMAELITES—Flowing robes of various colors, with capes of contrasting colors. Head-coverings of bright cloth, which fall over shoulders; dark beards.

SCENE I.—IN THE HOME OF JACOB.

(It is a small room, the doors at right and left being hung with draperies of heavy Oriental material.

Light comes from small windows at high elevations in the back wall, and also covered with curtains. A small table and several benches are covered with Oriental draperies and rugs. Animal-skin rugs are on the floor. Jacob lies on a couch at back center.)

Joseph (entering)—What more can I do now for thy comfort, my beloved father? (Kneels by couch.)

Jacob (patting Joseph's head)—Thou art indeed mindful of the comfort of thy father, thou son of my old age. Verily, there is nothing more that thou canst do.

Joseph—Methinks sometimes I should be in the meadow helping my brethren tend the sheep.

Jacob—Nay, my son, for who would care for me then? My life is made happy with thy presence.

Joseph—But my brethren do not seem to act kindly toward me because I do not help them more.

Jacob (rising and getting cloak of many colors from outside room)—Verily, thou shalt have thy reward, my son, for I have had made for thee this cloak, because of my love for thee.

Joseph (kissing his father)—Thou art indeed kind unto me, my father, and I shall esteem it very highly. [Tries it on.] See how fine it looks upon me!

(Enter Reuben, Judah and Simeon.)

Reuben—Peace be with thee, father.

Jacob—And with thee, my sons.

Joseph—Behold, brothers, the cloak of many colors which our father hath given me.

Simeon—Aye, it is very beautiful.

Judah (aside)—Humph! Why should he give such a cloak to Joseph? When we were his age our father gave no such cloak to us.

Reuben—Yea, it is very thoughtful in our father to remember his younger son in this manner.

(Enter Levi and Asher.)

Levi—Peace be with thee, father.

Jacob—And with thee, my sons.

Judah (aside to Levi and Asher)—Our father has just been bestowing a gift upon our brother Joseph. See this coat of many colors. Is it not beautiful? (They examine the coat.)

Asher (aside)—Our father seems to be forgetful of his remaining sons.

Levi (examining coat)—It is indeed very beautiful. Thou art surely a favored son, brother Joseph.

Simeon—Perchance some day thou wilt be a blessing to thy father.

Joseph (suddenly)—Aha, my brethren! I know not what the future days will bring me. Last night I dreamed a dream which is a mystery to me.

Jacob—Tell thy father and thy brothers thy dream, my son. (They all sit.)

Reuben—Yea, tell it unto us.

Joseph—Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose and stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about and made obeisance to my sheaf.

Reuben (angrily)—Shalt thou indeed reign over us? Or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?

Judah—What! shall we, his brethren, make obeisance to him, the youngest of us all? That shall never be.

Simeon—And to think that he should even tell us of such a dream. [Clenches his fists.] I can scarcely contain myself.

Joseph—Behold, I have dreamed yet another dream; and the sun and moon and eleven stars made obeisance to me.

Jacob—What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come and bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

Asher—It is absurd to think that our beloved father and mother should bow down to him.

Levi—Must we, his brethren, also believe that the dream means that we also shall bow to him?

Joseph—I know not what is the meaning of the dreams, for I am young and have not had the experience which thou hast had in such matters. The visions came to me in the night and left me in deep thought.

Reuben (rising)—Bah! We have no time to stop to discuss such a thing. Our work in the fields is waiting and we must go.

Jacob—Farewell, and peace be with thee. (All go.)

Joseph—Father, dost thou know the meaning of the dreams?

Jacob (shaking his head)—I know not. But the Lord Jehovah oftentimes speaks to us in divers ways, and the meaning is hidden from us for a time. Perhaps it will be revealed soon.

Joseph—I have thought much on these dreams, but they are a deep mystery. But why my brethren should be so angry with me for telling them, I know not.

Jacob (placing hands on his shoulders)—Do not let it trouble thee, my lad. If it is a message from Jehovah, it will be revealed in due season. Do not some of thy brethren feed the flocks in Shechem?

Joseph—Yea, father, that is our present pasture ground.

Jacob—Go, then, I pray thee, and see whether it be well with thy brethren and with the flocks, and bring me word again.

Joseph (rising)—I will do as thou hast said.

Jacob—Wear thy new cloak of many colors, for the nights are cool. Peace be with thee and a safe journey, my beloved son. (They embrace.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—ON THE PLAIN OF DOTHAN.

(Use country scene for back curtain, if available. Palm-trees at back corners, beneath which the brethren sit. They have shepherd crooks.)

Reuben—Shall we remain longer in this pasture? Verily, our flocks have fed well in Shechem and Dothan. Therefore, let us return unto Canaan and to the tent of our father Jacob.

Judah—Nay, why should we go back? Our father loveth us not. It is Joseph, our younger brother, that he favors.

Simeon—Yea, this dreamer of dreams! He thinketh that he is greater than we, and that some day he shall rule over us.

Dan—What meanest thou, my brethren?

Judah (surprised)—Have you not been told of the gift which our father made to Joseph, and of the dream which came to the lad?

Dan—Nay, tell it unto me.

Judah—When we went to visit our father he bestowed upon Joseph a fine new coat, made in many colors, and fit for a prince to wear.

Dan—He made no such gift to us when we were younger. Why, therefore, should he make such a gift to Joseph?

Simeon—It is because he hath greater love for the lad.

Dan—It is not just to do this, for the lad is no better than we. But what of the dream?

Judah—The lad declares he dreamed that we all were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, his sheaf arose, and stood upright, and the other sheaves stood round about and bowed down to his sheaf.

Dan—Does he mean to interpret that he shall some day reign over us?

Simeon—So it seems. But he had yet another dream, and said: "Behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars bowed down to me."

Dan—And does he mean that his father and mother and eleven brethren shall indeed come to bow down before him?

Judah—Verily, that is the interpretation. Yet it may never be.

Simeon—The lad is becoming too popular in our father's house. We must make away with him or our father will not deal fairly with us.

Asher (looking off)—Behold, the dreamer cometh!

Dan—Therefore let us slay him and cast him into some pit. Then we will see what becomes of dreamers. (Laughs.)

Simeon—That is a wise plan, my brother. It is time to put an end to such visions.

Judah—Then will our father give to us also the portion of his estate that would fall to Joseph.

Reuben—Wouldst thou kill the lad?

Asher—Yea, brother Reuben, we would kill him.

Reuben—I can not approve of that. Let us shed no blood, but cast him into the pit that is near by, and lay no hand upon him.

Simeon (sneeringly)—Is it in thine heart to get him out of our hands and deliver him again to his father?

Dan—Thou speakest right, brother Reuben. Let us shed no blood, lest it be on our hands.

Judah—Verily, to cast him in the pit will be enough.

Joseph (entering)—Hail to my brethren! (They all rise.)

Simeon—Hail to the chosen of our father.

Dan—Hail, our great ruler that is to be!

Judah—Hail, thou who art greater than the sun!

Joseph—Our father hath sent me to bring word to him if it be well with thee and with the flocks.

Simeon—Verily, it is well with us and with the flocks, but thou shalt not take the word to him.

(They seize him, take off his new coat and drag him away, in spite of his struggles. Reuben and Judah remain.)

Judah—Dost thou think it is not right for us to do thus with him? Our father's love toward us should be equal.

Reuben—Yea, he should not give more favors to one than to the others. Look! yonder comes a caravan bound for Egypt.

Judah (shading eyes)—It seemeth to be a company of Ishmaelites.

Simeon (entering with the other brethren and holding Joseph's coat)—The lad did struggle fiercely when we placed him in the pit. [Faint cries are heard.] Hearest thou his cries for mercy?

Judah—What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? Come, let us sell him to yonder Ishmaelites approaching, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh.

Reuben (eagerly)—Verily, thou art shrewd in thy plans, my brother. Would that I could think as thou. (Others nod heads.)

Simeon—Then will I go and hail the caravan, that it may come near by. (Runs off.)

Dan—So shall we go and fetch the lad hither quickly. (Exit.)

Judah (to Reuben)—Surely the lad should thank us for giving him the chance for such a long journey. (Laughs.)

Reuben—We also must make some plan that we may explain to our father what has become of the lad.

Judah—Verily, his heart will be torn when the lad does not return. He may even believe that we are guilty of some misdeed.

(The brethren return with Joseph, who is bound and much disheveled, and looks around wildly.)

Joseph—Oh, my brethren, what wouldst thou do with me?

Dan (sneeringly)—Thou wilt know it all when thy dreams shall come true.

Judah—We honor thee, brother Joseph, by sending thee into Egypt with these Ishmaelites of the caravan which is approaching.

Reuben—Verily, we will send thee to Egypt, the land of plenty.

Joseph—Oh, what have I done to deserve this punishment?

(Simeon enters with the Ishmaelite merchants.)

All Brethren (raising arms)—Hail to thee, our neighbors!

Merchants (similar salute)—Hail to thee, good shepherds!

Simeon (taking Joseph by the arm)—This is the slave of whom I have told thee. What wilt thou give us in exchange for him?

(Merchants examine Joseph and confer together.)

Merchant Chief—We will give thee twenty pieces of silver.

Brethren—Sell him! Sell him!

Chief—Why art thou so anxious to sell such a splendid lad? Of a truth, he doth not look like a slave.

Joseph—I am not a slave; I am their brother.

Judah—Hold thy tongue, thou vile dreamer!

Chief (takes coins from bag and counts twenty pieces into Simeon's hand)—Witness thou now that the exchange hath been made and the lad is ours. We will take him with us into Egypt. Peace be with you. (They exit with Joseph, who struggles and wails.)

Asher—Peace be with thee, and a safe journey!

Judah—So he goeth into Egypt and we will never be worried by him again.

Dan—The favored son of our father is no longer with us. Therefore let us all be merry. (Grabs several of the brethren and dances around with them.)

Reuben—But now we must make some excuse that we can give to our father as to what hath happened to the lad.

Simeon—Let us say unto him that a wild beast hath devoured the lad. Here is the new coat; let us slay a kid of the goats and dip the coat in the blood. Then

will our father think some wild beast hath devoured him and will grieve for his son. (All nod.)

Judah—It is a clever plan; so let us do.

Dan—I shall remain with the flocks, and you, my brethren, return to our father and tell him of the death of his son. (They go.)

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 6

A PRISONER PROMOTED

CHARACTERS.

PHARAOH—Ruler of Egypt.
MAKEZ—His Butler.
JOSEPH—A Hebrew Prisoner.
FOUR WISE MEN.
TWO SLAVES.
TWO GUARDS.
TWO PAGES.

SCENE OF THE STORY.

The scene is laid in Pharaoh's courtroom, three years after Joseph was sold by his brethren to the Ishmaelite merchants.

COSTUMES.

PHARAOH—Flowing robe of striped Egyptian cloth, with girdle and draperies of plain-colored satine. Peculiar-shaped head-dress of yellow satine, trimmed with beads. Dark hair and beard.

MAKEZ—A tunic of striped cloth, reaching just below the knees. Cape of bright color fastened at back of shoulders and hanging to knees. Head-dress of peculiar shape. Bare legs and sandals. Dark hair and beard.

JOSEPH—A faded tunic of tan color. Bare legs and sandals. Dark hair, but no beard. He is about twenty years of age.

WISE MEN—Old men with long beards. Bright, flowing robes and turbans of contrasting colors.

SLAVES—Negroes, if possible, wearing short tunics, without sleeves; small turbans; sandals; beads around their necks.

GUARDS—Young men with short, dark beards. Tunics of tan or brown cloth, with capes of dark brown. Bare legs and sandals. Helmets made of old derby hats painted white, with fan-shaped ornament of paper in front. They have spears.

PAGES—Small boys with tunics of bright cloth and capes of contrasting colors.

(The scene is laid in Pharaoh's courtroom. Make it as elaborate as possible, with rugs and draperies. Pharaoh sits on the throne, built on a raised platform at back of stage. Negro slaves stand on each side, fanning him with huge fans made of ostrich plumes or palm-leaf, fastened on long handles. Rich canopy over the throne. Pages sit on both sides of the steps leading to throne. Guard stands by door at each side of room. Chief butler stands near. At rise of curtain four wise men are bowed on the floor before Pharaoh.)

Pharaoh—Arise, ye wise men of Egypt! I have sent for you this day because of a dream which troubleth me. (Men stand.)

One Wise Man—What is thy dream, great Pharaoh?

Pharaoh—I dreamed, and, behold, I stood by a river, and there came up seven fat cows, and they fed in a meadow. And, behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ill-fed and lean. And the ill-fed and lean cows did eat up the seven fat cows. Then did I awake, but soon slept again and dreamed a second time. And, behold, seven good ears of corn

came up on one stalk and seven thin ears sprang up after them. And the seven thin ears devoured the seven full ears. Then I awoke again. Now, is there one among you who can tell me the meaning of these dreams, for my spirit is troubled because of them?

First Wise Man—Most gracious king, I am unable to interpret the meaning of thy dreams.

Second Wise Man—O great Pharaoh, I regret that I am unable to help thee.

Third Wise Man—O king, neither can I tell thee the meaning of thy dreams.

Fourth Wise Man—O mighty Pharaoh, thy dreams do trouble me also, but I am unable to interpret them.

Pharaoh (angrily)—Are ye called the wise men of Egypt, and yet are not able to interpret a dream?

Butler (stepping forward)—O great Pharaoh, I am only thy chief butler, but I beg that I be allowed to speak.

Pharaoh—What wouldst thou say?

Butler—O king, I do remember my faults this day. When Pharaoh was angered with his servants and put me in prison, both me and the chief baker, behold, one night we dreamed a dream. And the next morning we told it unto a young man, a Hebrew, a servant to the captain of the guard, and he interpreted to us our dream.

Pharaoh—And what was it that thou didst dream?

Butler—In my dream, behold, a vine was before me, and in the vine were three branches, and it appeared that it was budded, and the blossoms shot forth and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes. And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into the cup and gave it unto Pharaoh's

hand. And the Hebrew said unto me: "This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days; yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head and restore unto thee thy place, and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler." And, behold, it has come to pass as he said.

Pharaoh—H'm! And what was the dream of my chief baker?

Butler—The baker did dream that he stood with three white baskets on his head. In the uppermost basket there were all manner of bake-meats for Pharaoh, but the birds came and ate them out of the basket. And the Hebrew said: "Behold, the three baskets are three days; yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee and shall hang thee on a tree and the birds shall eat thy flesh." Then, O mighty Pharaoh, it also came to pass as he said.

Pharaoh—H'm! Thou hast spoken well. [To page:] Wilt thou go and order the guards to bring this young Hebrew into my presence? [The page goes.] And now, my beloved butler, who is the man that did interpret thy dream?

Butler—His name is Joseph, O mighty king. He was brought down from Canaan by a caravan and sold to Potiphar, captain of thy guards.

Pharaoh—And for what reason was he thrust into prison?

Butler—O mighty Pharaoh, it seemeth that he was made chief of the servants in Potiphar's house, but displeased his master's wife and for this cause was he thrust into prison.

(Joseph enters and falls upon face before Pharaoh.)

Pharaoh—I have dreamed a dream and there is none that can interpret it for me; but I have heard say of thee that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. Arise and hear me tell it unto thee.

Joseph (rising)—Nay, it is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

Pharaoh (repeats his dream to Joseph).

Joseph (advancing toward Pharaoh)—Behold, God hath showed Pharaoh what He is about to do. The seven good cows and the seven good ears are seven years of plenty throughout all the land of Egypt. And the seven lean cows and the seven lean ears are seven years of famine which shall follow. And all the plenty shall be forgotten and the famine shall consume the land, for it shall be very grievous. Because the thing is established of God, the dream was given to Pharaoh twice, for God will shortly bring it to pass. Therefore, let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise and set him over the land of Egypt, and let him appoint officers over the land. And let them gather up one-fifth of all the food in those seven good years and keep it in the cities. And that food shall be stored against the seven years of famine, so that the land perish not through the famine.

Pharaoh—This plan seemeth to be a good one. But can we find such a man to take charge of this work, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?

First Wise Man—Nay, O king, I know of no one in all of Egypt who is fitted for this task.

Second Wise Man—Neither know I of one who can be trusted.

Third Wise Man—It is an important and great responsibility, O my king.

Fourth Wise Man—If we search the whole of Egypt, we may not find one to whom this can be trusted.

Butler—Most gracious Pharaoh, wilt thou not entrust this task to the Hebrew who hath revealed this dream to thee, because he is filled with the Spirit of God? (All nod heads.)

Pharaoh (to Joseph)—Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. Thou shalt therefore be over my house, and according to thy word shall all the people be ruled. Only in the throne will I be greater than thou. See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt, in token of which I give to thee my ring [puts ring on his finger]. [To servants:] Bring a golden chain and fine raiment for this man. [They exit.] Thou shalt ride in the second chariot and all my people shall bow the knee to thee. I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

Joseph—May the Lord God give me power to do His will.

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 7

SAVED TO SERVE

CHARACTERS.

Pharaoh—Ruler of Egypt.
Joseph—A Hebrew Governor.
Tamar—Custodian of the Granary.
Eleven Brothers of Joseph.
Two Slaves.
Two Guards.
Two Pages.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

Scene I.—Pharaoh's throne-room; the brethren seek provisions.

Scene II.—Same, several months later; Joseph tests his brethren.

Scene III.—Same, next day; Joseph reveals himself.

COSTUMES.

Pharaoh—Flowing robe of striped Egyptian cloth, with girdle and draperies of plain colors. Peculiar-shaped head-dress of yellow satine, trimmed with beads. Dark hair and beads.

Tamar—A tunic of striped cloth, reaching just below the knees. Cape of bright color fastened at back of shoulders and hanging to knees. Head-dress of pe-

culiar shape. Bare legs and sandals. Dark hair and beard.

Joseph—Costume similar to Pharaoh's.

The Brethren—Flowing robes of various colors, with overdraperies (mantles) of contrasting colors. Turbans and hoods. Some have white beards and some brown and black. Benjamin has no beard.

Slaves—Negroes, if possible, wearing short tunics, without sleeves. Small turbans. Sandals. Beads around their necks.

Guards—Young men with short, dark beards. Tunics of tan cloth, with capes of dark brown. Bare legs and sandals. Helmets made of old derby hats painted white, with paper, fan-shaped ornament in front. They have spears.

Pages—Small boys with tunics of bright cloth and capes of contrasting colors.

Scene I.—The Throne-room in Pharaoh's House.

(Arrange the setting as elaborately as possible, with rugs and draperies. Joseph sits upon the throne, built on a raised platform at back of stage. Slaves stand on each side, fanning him with long-handled palm-leaf or plume fans. Rich canopy over the throne. Pages sit on both sides of steps leading to the throne. Guard stands by door. Tamar stands before Joseph.)

Joseph—Two years of the famine already have passed and there has been no suffering among our people because my God has kept us. But dost thou think there will be enough of the grain to feed us five years more, Tamar?

Tamar—Indeed, a bountiful supply still remaineth, my master. Surely thy God has been with us.

Joseph—And do you still supply the wants of those who come from distant lands?

Tamar—Aye, master, all thou hast sent unto me are given grain. Surely the famine must have been far-reaching.

Joseph—Then shalt thou continue to give grain to all who may come, until such a time as there might be chance for our own people to suffer. Thou hast been a faithful servant to me and to thy country.

Servant (entering and bowing)—My master, outside there await a company of Hebrews who have come far in search of grain.

Joseph (brightening)—Hebrews! Bring them to me at once. [Servant goes.] Verily, Tamar, when Hebrews are reported to be in our country my heart leaps within me. It seemeth many, many years—yea, it is a dozen years and more—since I dwelt with my own people. I wonder if by chance these men are from Hebron and know of my father and my brethren. It was in my seventeenth year that they sent me into Egypt and into slavery. But it was God's will that I should be here at this time to feed my own people. I have learned that sometimes when we are sorely smitten and our hearts are heavy, God is only preparing us for some special work.

Servant (entering with all the brethren except Benjamin)—Master, the Hebrews are before thee.

(Joseph starts to rise as they enter, but, upon recognizing them, he sinks back, covering his eyes with his arm for a second, then recovers himself.)

Joseph—Whence come ye?

Judah—From the land of Canaan to buy food, because of famine in our land.

Joseph—Ye are spies, come to see the nakedness of the land.

Reuben—Nay, my lord, thy servants have come to buy food.

Simeon—We are all sons of one man in the land of Canaan, but the youngest remaineth yet with our father, and one is not.

Joseph (eagerly)—One is not? Is he dead?

Simeon—He was sold a slave into Egypt.

Joseph—I doubt your tale, and so I have said ye are spies. But your father, is he well? And your youngest brother?

Simeon (nodding)—Aye, my lord.

Joseph—Verily, as thou sayest, so shall it be proved. By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. Go and fetch him, that your words may be proved; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, ye are spies. But one of you must remain here in Egypt, in the prison, as security until ye shall return.

(The brethren talk among themselves and agree that Simeon shall remain.)

Simeon (coming forward)—I will remain with thee until my brethren have proved themselves.

Joseph (to guards)—Bind him and put him in the prison, but see that he is treated well and hath sufficient food. [Guards exit with Simeon, and Joseph turns to the other brethren.] Now will ye go and carry corn which I shall provide for the famine of your houses, and bring your youngest brother unto me, so that your words may be proved and ye shall not die. [They exit, followed by Tamar, who is halted by Joseph.] And wilt thou, Tamar, see that the sacks of

these men are filled with corn, and restore every man's money, and give them provision for their journey.

Tamar—It shall be done as thou hast said, my master. (Exit; Joseph weeps.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—SAME AS BEFORE, SEVERAL MONTHS LATER.

(Tamar is alone and goes to the door to admit the brethren, including Benjamin. They all have baskets and sacks of gifts.)

Tamar—Welcome again into the house of our master. (They stand at various places around the room.)

Judah—As we came hither, we met thy master, who bade us to come in and wait until noon, when we shall dine with him.

Dan—But we fear that thy master seeketh to ensnare us and take us for bondsmen because of a sin that seemeth to have come upon us.

Tamar—And what is thy sin?

Dan—Oh, sir, thou dost well remember that we were here once before to buy food. [Tamar nods.] And it came to pass as we returned home we stopped at the inn and opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack; and we have brought it again in our hand. [They extend hands, showing money.] We can not tell who put our money in our sacks, but we have brought it again, and more also, to buy grain.

Tamar—Peace be to you, and fear not. Your God and the God of your father hath given you treasure in your sacks. I had your money. Behold, the master hath arrived!

(Joseph enters, followed by two slaves, pages and servants. The brethren bow to the floor until he is seated. Joseph motions for Tamar to come close and whispers to him: "Go, fetch their brother Simeon." Tamar obeys.)

Joseph—And now, my Hebrew friends, what of thy welfare?

Reuben—We are all well, beloved master, and bring thee these gifts [place baskets and sacks on steps of throne] from our father, who is yet in Canaan.

Joseph—Is your father well? Is he yet alive?

Reuben—Verily, he liveth and is in good health.

Joseph (pointing to Benjamin)—Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me?

Benjamin (stepping forward)—Yea, I am the youngest of the brothers.

Joseph—God be gracious unto thee, my son.

Tamar (entering with Simeon)—Behold again thy brother who was left in Egypt. (They all embrace him.)

Joseph (rising)—And now, my friends, wilt thou precede me into the banquet-room, for surely thou art hungry after thy long journey, and I have prepared meat for thee. [Servant opens door and they go. Joseph turns to Tamar:] Wilt thou command the steward again to fill these men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in the mouth of his sack. And put my silver cup in the mouth of the sack of the youngest one, together with his money. Then wilt thou follow them in the morning, and, when thou dost overtake them, say unto them: "Wherefore have ye done this evil thing?" Then shalt thou search them and bring them again unto me.

Tamar—Thy bidding shall be obeyed, my lord. (Bows.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—SAME AS BEFORE, NEXT DAY.

(Joseph seated, with slaves, servants, guards, etc. The brethren are before him.)

Joseph (sternly)—What deed is this that ye have done?

Judah—What shall we say unto my lord? What shall we speak? How shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants. Behold, we are my lord's servants, both we and also he with whom the cup is found.

Joseph—God forbid that I should do so, but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant. And, as for the rest of you, go in peace unto your father.

Judah—Oh, my lord, let not thine anger burn against thy servant, for thou art even as Pharaoh. When thou didst send us back to get our younger brother, our father said unto us: "Ye know that my wife bare me two sons, and the one went out from me and I said, 'Surely he is torn in pieces,' and I saw him not since. Now, if ye take this son also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave." Therefore, if we return again unto our father and the lad is not with us, he will die. Moreover, thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying: "If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father forever." Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad, as a bondsman to my lord,

and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? (Extends arms pleadingly.)

Joseph (covering face with hands)—Cause every man here but these Hebrews to go out from me. [All go.] Do ye not know me? I am Joseph, your brother! [Weeps aloud, while the brethren look at one another in awe.] Come near to me, I pray you. [Stretches out arms.] Don't you understand? I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. But be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life, and He hath made me ruler over all the land of Egypt. For two years hath the famine been in the land, and yet there are five years in the which there shall be no harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So, now it was not you that sent me hither, but God; and He hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, and go to my father and tell him this, and bid him come down unto me. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and shall be near unto me—thou and thy children and thy children's children and thy flocks and thy herds and all that thou hast. And there will I nourish thee, for yet there are five years of famine, lest thou and thy households come to poverty. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen, and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.

(He rises and embraces Benjamin, weeping loudly, then kisses and embraces the others, calling each by name.)

Pharaoh (entering)—Pray, what meaneth the sound of this weeping that cometh to me in my chamber? [All turn to him and bow.] Is there sadness in your hearts?

Joseph—Nay, my lord Pharaoh. We weep because our hearts are joyful, for, behold, these men are my brothers, come down from Canaan. And lo, I have not seen them for more than twelve years.

Pharaoh—Behold! Pharaoh doth also rejoice with thee, and all mine house. And now wilt thou bid thy brethren to lade their beasts, and go into the land of Canaan and get their father and their households and come unto me, and I will give them the good of the land of Egypt and they shall eat the fat of the land.

All Brethren (bowing their heads to the floor)—God bless the mighty Pharaoh! Our lord is bountiful to his servants!

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 8

AN ADOPTED SON

(The Childhood of Moses.)

CHARACTERS.

Amram—An Israelite.
Jochebed—His Wife.
Miriam—Their Daughter.
Moses, Aaron } Their Sons.
Ziba—An Egyptian Princess.
Basmath, Taptha } Her Servants.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

Scene I.—Room in Amram's home; Pharaoh's law defied.

Scene II.—By the riverside; a mother's sacrifice.

COSTUMES.

Amram—A robe of black and white stripes, reaching half-way below the knees. Turban of white. Short, dark beard. Sandals.

Jochebed—A flowing robe of dark (bright) blue. Scarf of red for her head when she leaves the house. Dark hair.

Miriam—A child of about ten years. Wears a dress of mixed colors, in stripes. Ribbon around forehead. Dark hair.

Moses—A tiny babe, or a doll.

Aaron—A child of three years. Dress of dark red or brown. Dark hair.

Ziba—A young woman of eighteen or twenty years. Long gown of soft, pink cloth, with beads and jewels. Sandals. Dark hair. Head-scarf.

Servants—Dresses of striped Egyptian cloth, reaching half-way between knees and ankles. Sandals. Head-scarfs.

Scene I.—A Room in Amram's Home.

(It is a small room, more like a hut. Doors at right and left, and window at back, all covered with plain curtains of cotton. Plain, low table and benches. Water-jars on table and in corner of room. Egyptian designs on the wall will add to the effect. Palm-trees may be seen through the window. The ark may be made from a basket, covered with mud and allowed to dry, then painted black to resemble pitch. At rise of curtain, Jochebed is busily fixing a small blanket in the little ark. Miriam, a child of ten, is seated, singing to the baby Moses. Aaron, a child of three years, is playing on the floor. Amram stands at the window, watching for possible soldiers.)

Jochebed (turning quickly, as noise is heard outside)—What was that? Are they coming?

Amram—Have no fear, my wife beloved. It was only a horseman of Pharaoh passing by. Is the ark ready?

Jochebed (rising and approaching him)—Oh, Amram, my husband, why do they persecute us so? (Weeps.)

Amram (putting his arm around her)—Verily, the Egyptians are fearful lest the Hebrews multiply so greatly that when there cometh a war we shall join ourselves with the enemy and fight against them. Therefore, Pharaoh hath made this law that every male Hebrew babe must be cast into the river to perish.

Jochebed—Pharaoh's law is cruel, to take the life of an innocent babe. Oh, I can not bear it! I can not bear it! (Weeps.)

Amram—Hush! or you will bring the soldiers upon us with thy lamentations. If they find the babe here, we shall all die.

Jochebed—For three months we have hidden him from the searchers, but now we shall never see him again. [Takes babe from Miriam and caresses it.] I would gladly die to save him. (Miriam caresses Aaron.)

Amram—Verily, I also would give my life for him, but it would not save him. We therefore will set him afloat upon the river in this little ark [picks it up], instead of casting him into the water. Perhaps by the providence of God he may return to us.

Jochebed—With our baby boys all killed, Israel will soon be but a nation of women, helpless slaves of the heartless Pharaoh.

Amram—Remember, God hath promised us a deliverer. It is in fear of him that Pharaoh doth make this cruel law.

Miriam (going to her father)—Oh, father, let us keep him a little longer. I will keep watch, and, when I see an Egyptian coming, then will I hide him.

Amram (shaking his head and caressing her)—Nay, my daughter, it would be useless. Every day his voice groweth stronger and the soldiers would surely hear his cries. Come, Jochebed, and put him in the ark. (Miriam weeps.)

Jochebed (putting babe in the ark)—Oh, my little babe! Thus it was that Abraham laid his son Isaac upon the altar. May God save thee also! (Weeps.)

Amram—Verily doth the Lord reward those who are faithful. [Examines ark.] Thou hast made a lovely bed for him, beloved.

Jochebed—Yea, my husband, it is made of the best of reeds from the banks of the river, and we have covered it with pitch and slime, so that not a drop of water can find its way to harm my babe.

Amram (taking ark and giving it to Miriam)—Now, let Miriam take the ark and place it upon the water. The river is close by us, and she can remain to see what happens. Have faith, beloved, and God will guide the little boat.

Jochebed (taking the ark from Miriam)—Nay, I myself will place it in the river.

Amram (shaking his head)—If Pharaoh's officers see thee with the basket in thine arms, it will arouse their suspicions. The risk is too great for thee. Remain here with me, beloved, and trust it to Miriam.

Jochebed (determinedly)—Nay, do not oppose me, Amram, for, if my child is to be given to the mercy of the river, I will do it myself.

Amram—Have thine own way, then. But let Miriam go with thee and remain to watch him. Then shall she bring us word if anything shall happen. Hasten, then. [Jochebed puts scarf over head.] Go by the back way,

and glide among the bushes and reeds, carefully, so that none may see thee. [Raises arms.] May God have compassion upon thee and upon all His chosen people. (They exit.) [CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—BY THE RIVERSIDE.

(River scene on back curtain, if possible; otherwise use plain blue curtain. Mass of reeds and rushes across center of platform to obscure the river's edge. Palms and ferns will do, the boxes or pots being hidden by masses of vines. Paper iris and lilies growing among the bushes. There should be an open space, by which the women approach the river. An electric fan off stage will give suggestion of a breeze. At rise of curtain, Miriam steals softly across to left, looking cautiously around, then runs and hides behind a bush, as Ziba and her attendants enter from right.)

Ziba—Methinks this is the place where we came yesterday for my bath. (Looks toward river.)

Basmath—Verily, my princess, it is a splendid place, for the beach is wide and the sand is warm.

Taptha—There is no chance here for alligators or crocodiles to molest thee, my princess.

Ziba—The iris and the lilies are beautiful to-day. And look over there. [Points.] Something is caught among the reeds.

Basmath—It looks like a basket. Perhaps some travelers have lost it from their barge.

Taptha—There is something alive in it; I saw it move.

Ziba (as cry of babe is heard)—Hark! [All listen.] Verily, it soundeth like the cry of a babe. We must

see this mystery before us. Go, Taptha, and fetch the basket for me. [She goes.] Be very cautious, though, for it might be a reptile or a beast.

(Miriam comes from her hiding and stands watching them.)

Taptha (returning with basket)—Nay, it is no beast, but only a harmless Hebrew babe.

Ziba—A Hebrew babe! [Looks at him.] And how frightened he is! Give him to me. [Takes basket.] Verily, one of the Hebrew mothers has tried to save her son. [Takes baby from the ark.] And how big he is! How ever did she manage to hide him so long?

Basmath—Thou must throw him back into the river, my princess. Remember Pharaoh's edict.

Ziba (shaking her head)—Nay, I will do no such thing! The river has refused him and given him to me. [Sees Miriam.] Come here, little girl, and see what I have found.

Miriam (eagerly, looking at babe)—Why, it is a little Hebrew baby! Isn't he a dear? And Pharaoh has ordered them all to be thrown into the river.

Ziba—Yea, but we will not do the thing. I have found him and will keep him for mine own. See the beautiful ringlets in his hair! See the sparkle of his eyes! See the dimples in the fatness of his cheeks! See how he holds onto my hand! [All crowd around her.] He shall grow up in my care and learn to love me as a mother.

Taptha—Well, my princess, if thou art determined to keep him, we must have a nurse, for thy maidens are not skilled in caring for children.

Basmath—It is a Hebrew babe and should have a Hebrew nurse.

Miriam (eagerly)—If I may speak unto thee, beautiful princess, I can tell thee of a Hebrew woman who will make a good nurse. She dwelleth near by, and I will fetch her for thee.

Ziba—Thou art a thoughtful little maiden. Hasten and bring her to me. (Miriam runs off. Ziba sits on a rock, with babe in her arms, crooning a lullaby. Allow time for this.)

Taptha—Thou knowest that this is against the king's decree, my princess. He should be thrown again into the river.

Ziba—Do not try to argue with me further, my maidens. I love this baby and will not see him perish.

Basmath—Perhaps thy father, the mighty Pharaoh, will forbid thee keeping it.

Ziba—He has never yet denied me anything my heart desired.

Taptha—Verily, thou art a fortunate daughter. But, let me hold the child, while thou dost go for thy bath.

Ziba (shaking her head)—Nay, I will wait until the coming of the nurse. [Looks off.] See, the little girl returneth, bringing the woman with her.

Miriam (entering hurriedly with Jochebed)—Most noble princess, here is Jochebed, a Hebrew mother, who has been forced by Pharaoh's edict to cast her son to the river. She will gladly nurse your child. (Jochebed weeps.)

Ziba—Dry thy tears, good woman, and give thy mother-love to this sweet little babe. [Gives it to Jochebed.] Nurse it for me and I will pay thee well.

Jochebed (hugging the child)—He looks like a healthy babe. Oh, my little one! [To Ziba:] Hast thou a name for him?

Ziba—I will call him Moses, because I drew him from the river. Bring him to the palace to-morrow and we will make arrangements for his care.

Jochebed (sadly)—But if the officers find me with a Hebrew baby boy of this age, they will take him from me and kill him.

Ziba (wringing her hands in distraction)—Ah! the cruel edict! What shall we do? [Brightening.] Aha! I will put my necklace upon thee, and then none will dare to harm him. [Puts necklace on her.] All the soldiers know the royal amulet. This will protect thee, even as it does me. [Kisses babe.] Farewell, my Moses, my pretty water-baby. Remember, Jochebed, to bring him to me to-morrow in the morning.

(Ziba and her maidens go behind bushes and Jochebed and Miriam exit.)

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 9

FROM PALACE TO PRAIRIE

(The Calling of Moses.)

CHARACTERS.

Moses—A Son of Promise.
Jethro—A Priest of Midian.
Egyptian Taskmaster.
Hebrew Slaves.
Four Daughters of Jethro.
Two Shepherds.
Angel of the Lord.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

Scene I.—A brickyard; Moses asserts himself.

Scene II.—By a well in Midian; the daughters of Jethro.

Scene III.—Jethro's tent in Midian; Moses is befriended.

Scene IV.—Near Mount Horeb; the burning bush.

COSTUMES.

Moses—In first three scenes he wears a robe of striped Egyptian cloth, reaching half-way between knees and ankles. It is tied at the waist by a narrow girdle. Peculiar-shaped hood of bright cloth. Sandals. No beard (for he is yet a young man). In last scene

he wears the costume of a shepherd—a tunic of tan-colored toweling, made without sleeves. Sandals. Black hair and short, black beard. Carries staff.

JETHRO—A man of middle age. Wears the flowing white robe of the Hebrews, with mantle (overdrapery) of dark blue. Turban of white. Long, dark beard.

TASKMASTER—Tunic of striped Egyptian cloth, with turban of bright material. Bare legs and sandals. Lash in his hand.

SLAVES—Three will be sufficient. They wear costumes similar to modern athletic track-suits of dark cloth.

SHEPHERDS—Young men, with costumes similar to that of Moses in Scene IV.

DAUGHTERS OF JETHRO—Flowing robes of various colors, with head-scarfs of contrasting colors.

ANGEL—Usual costume of white.

SCENE I.—A BRICKYARD IN EGYPT.

(Plain blue back curtain, or a country scene. Piles of bricks and boxes of mortar at right and left. Hebrew slaves at work with trowels. At rise of curtain, the taskmaster is beating one of them.)

Taskmaster—Ye dogs of Hebrews! Will ye defy the laws of the mighty Pharaoh? Because ye are idle ye have cried unto him, saying: "Let us go and sacrifice to our God." Therefore shall no more straw be given unto you for the making of the bricks, but at the command of Pharaoh ye shall gather your own straw. (Continues beating.)

Moses (rushing in and grabbing taskmaster)—Ye brute of an Egyptian! Have ye no heart within you? (Knocks him dead.)

Slave (haughtily to Moses)—Who made *thee* a prince and a judge over us? Who art thou, that thou dost kill an officer of Pharaoh?

Moses—Verily, my brother, I can not bear to see the oppression of my people, for Pharaoh doth rule with unjust laws.

Slave—Albeit, thou shouldst hold thy peace, for if this thing become known unto Pharaoh, thy life shall be in danger. Only patience and obedience will bring us out of our bondage, for God seemeth to have forgotten us.

Moses—Nay, He hath not forgotten thee, but in due time thou shalt obtain thy freedom.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—BY A WELL IN MIDIAN.

(Use same background as before, with well at right. Group of palm-trees near by. Moses sits under a tree, watching shepherds drawing water, which they carry off to their flocks at right. Daughters of Jethro enter from left and proceed to draw water, but the shepherds drive them away.)

A Shepherd—Get thee away, daughters of Jethro! Dost thou not know thy place? Thou art only women and should not intrude while we are watering our flocks. (They step back under a tree.)

Moses (coming forward)—Fair women, do not fear the shepherds, but give me thy pitchers and I will draw the water for thee.

(The women bring their pitchers and smile, then talk in pantomime together, while he carries water to imaginary flocks off left.)

One Daughter—Thou art indeed kind unto thy handmaidens, and thou shalt be duly rewarded.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—IN FRONT OF JETHRO'S TENT.

(Use same background as before, with tent in place of well. Use tent of striped canvas, if possible, with roof effect in front. Electric fan off stage to give suggestion of a breeze. Jethro is seated in porch of tent. Daughters enter from left.)

Jethro—How is it that ye are returned so soon today, my daughters?

A Daughter—We were driven from the well by a couple of haughty shepherds, but an Egyptian delivered us out of their hands and drew water for our flocks.

Jethro—And where is he? Why is it that ye have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread.

A Daughter—Verily, in our happiness we forgot our hospitality, but the well is not far and we will bring him hither, for he is resting under the palm-trees. Zipporah and I will fetch him while our sisters prepare bread and meat for us. (Two daughters go.)

(Draw curtain to denote lapse of time.)

Zipporah (returning with her sister and Moses)—Behold, father, here is Moses, the man who delivered us from the anger of the shepherds and carried water for us. (Girls go inside tent, Zipporah remaining in back of doorway, listening to the men talk.)

Jethro (rising)—Welcome thou art indeed into the tent of a brother. Come and rest thyself, while my daughters prepare bread and meat. [They sit.] Whither art thou bound, young man?

Moses—Verily, thou art kind to a stranger, and it is good to abide in the shadow of thy tent. Whither I am bound I know not, for I am a wanderer in the desert, fled from the wrath of Pharaoh.

Jethro—And what hath caused Pharaoh to kindle his wrath to one of his own people?

Moses—Nay, I am not one of his own people. But I was adopted into his household when I was a babe, and educated in the language and customs of his people. I am of Hebrew birth and my parents are lost from me. A fortnight ago, as I walked through the brickyard, I beheld an Egyptian smite one of my Hebrew brethren. My anger was kindled because of their oppression and I killed the fellow. When Pharaoh heard of it he sought to slay me, but I escaped.

Jethro—Verily, the Lord God has guided thee, and until He may call thee for greater works, thou must abide here with me. If thou wilt be content, I will set thee to keep my flocks, and thou also shalt have Zipporah, my daughter, to be thy wife.

Moses—O priest of God, thou art indeed most kind unto thy servant. As thou hast said, so shall it be.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE IV.—AT THE FOOT OF MOUNT HOREB.

(A mountain scene on back curtain, if possible. Numerous bushes and shrubs at back of stage. A pan of red tableau powder is concealed behind one, which is lighted by the angel, who hides behind it. Electric fan off stage gives suggestion of a breeze. Moses enters in shepherd costume, with staff. He also may have a couple of dogs, if desired.)

Moses—I must turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. (He advances toward the bush.)

Angel (after smoke of fire has blown away)—Moses! Moses!

Moses—Here am I.

Angel—Draw not nigh the bush, but take thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

Moses (removing sandals)—Who art thou, and wherefore hast thou called me?

Angel—I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. [Moses covers his face with arm.] I have seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters.

And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them into a land flowing with milk and honey.

Come, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.

Moses—Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?

Angel—Because I have chosen thee, and I will be with thee. And this shall be a token unto thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

Moses—But when I shall come unto the children of Israel and shall say unto them, "The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you," and they shall ask of me, "What is his name?" what shall I say unto them?

Angel—I AM THAT I AM. Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. This is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

Go, and gather the elders of Israel together and tell them this thing, and they shall hearken to thy voice. Then ye shall bring them unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us; so now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God.

And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand. Then will I smite Egypt with all my wonders, and after that he will let you go.

Moses—But suppose they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice? For they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.

Angel—What is that in thine hand?

Moses—A rod.

Angel—Thou shalt cast it upon the ground and it will become a serpent, that they may believe that the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. Put now thy hand into thy bosom. (Moses obeys.)

Moses (removing hand from bosom)—Behold, it is white with leprosy.

Angel—Now put it again into thy bosom. (Moses obeys.)

Moses (removing hand from bosom)—Behold, it is restored!

Angel—Even so do before the children of Israel. But if they will not believe these two signs, then shalt

thou take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land, and it shall become blood.

Moses—O my Lord, I am not eloquent, but am slow of speech.

Angel—Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

Moses—O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.

Angel—Is not Aaron, the Levite, thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee, and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. And thou shalt put words in his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs. Now, return unto Egypt, for all the men which sought thy life are dead. (Vanishes behind bush.)

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 10

DELIVERED FROM BONDAGE

(The Plagues of Egypt.)

CHARACTERS.

PHARAOH—King of Egypt.
MOSES—Leader of the Israelites.
AARON—Moses' Brother.
OFFICERS OF PHARAOH'S COURT.
SON OF PHARAOH.
SERVANTS OF PHARAOH (two).
ANGEL OF THE LORD.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—Pharaoh's courtroom; a challenge.
SCENE II.—By the wayside; God's covenant.
SCENE III.—Pharaoh's courtroom; the plagues.
SCENE IV.—The same, next morning; the Passover.
SCENE V.—The same, several days later; pursuit.

COSTUMES.

PHARAOH—Flowing robe of striped Egyptian cloth, with girdle and draperies of plain-colored satine. Peculiar-shaped head-dress of yellow satine, trimmed with beads. Sandals. Dark beard.

MOSES—Wears a flowing white robe, with mantle (overdrapery) of dark blue. Dark hair and long, dark beard. No turban.

Aaron—Costume similar to Moses', but with mantle of a different color.

Officers—Tunics of white or tan cloth, reaching to knees and without sleeves. Capes of various colors. They wear light-brown socks, with sandals laced high over the socks with black or brown laces in criss-cross fashion. Some with beards and some without. Bare heads.

Servants—Negroes, if possible, one standing on each side of Pharaoh and fanning him with long-handled fans made from plumes. They wear short tunics, without sleeves, and have small turbans. Beads around the neck.

Pharaoh's Son—A lad of twelve or fifteen years. Short tunic of striped Egyptian cloth. He appears only as a dead child, at the feet of Pharaoh.

Angel—Usual costume of white.

Scene I.—Pharaoh's Courtroom.

(The settings should be as elaborate as possible, with draperies and rugs. Pharaoh is on the throne, with slaves on each side, fanning him with large fans made of ostrich plumes. Potted palms may also be used. Moses and Aaron stand before Pharaoh.)

Moses—O mighty Pharaoh, who ruleth the kingdoms of Egypt, we come unto thee to bring a message from the Lord God of Israel. For, verily, He hath appeared unto me to petition thee that thou shalt let His people go and hold a feast unto Him in the wilderness.

Pharaoh—And who is the Lord God, that I should obey His voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord; neither shall I let Israel go.

Aaron—The God of the Hebrews hath met with us. Let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.

Pharaoh (rising)—Depart from me, Aaron and Moses! Ye have only planned a scheme to get the people from their work. Behold, the people of the land are many, and ye would make them rest from their burdens. Verily, they are idle, and more work shall be laid upon them. [Points to door.] Get thee out of my presence! (They go.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—BY THE WAYSIDE.

(Use a drop curtain in front of last scene. Angel and Moses enter from opposite sides.)

Moses (falling upon his knees)—O Lord, Thou art everywhere before me. But why hast Thou so evilly entreated my people? Why hast Thou sent me unto them? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name he hath increased the burdens of my people, and Thou hast not delivered them at all.

Angel—Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land.

I am the Lord. And I appeared unto Abraham, and unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known unto them.

I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers.

And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant.

Therefore, say unto the children of Israel: "I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and will redeem you with great judgments.

"And ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, and I will bring you unto the land, concerning which I did swear to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.

"And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them."

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—PHARAOH'S COURTROOM.

(Same as before. He is seated, with slaves on each side. Moses and Aaron stand before him. Several officers of the court stand near.)

Moses—O mighty Pharaoh, wilt thou hear again the command of our God to let my people go from their bondage? For He is a mighty God, and doeth wondrous things. Verily, He hath turned the water of the river into blood; He hath sent plagues of frogs, of lice, of flies, of boils, of hail, of locusts, of murrain of the beasts, and hath covered the land with darkness, but thou hast not let us go.

Pharaoh—Go ye and serve the Lord, only let your flocks and your herds remain.

Moses (shaking his head)—Our flocks and herds must also go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind. For thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God. Thou must also give us sacrifices and burnt-offerings.

Pharaoh (rising in anger)—Nay, I will not let them go. Now, get thee from me, and take heed to thyself that thou come to me no more, for the day that thou seest my face thou shalt die.

Moses—Thou hast spoken well, Pharaoh, for verily I will see thy face again no more. Thus saith the Lord unto me: If Pharaoh will not now let my people go, about midnight will I go through Egypt, and all the first-born in the land shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sitteth upon the throne [Pharaoh sinks into his chair, with hands to his head], even to the first-born of his servants and all the first-born of beasts. And there shall be a great cry through all the land of Egypt, such as never has been heard, nor shall be any more. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast, that ye may know that the Lord doth make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. Then shall ye let my people go. (Exits in a rage.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE IV.—PHARAOH'S COURTROOM.

(As before, early next morning. Pharaoh upon the throne, with dead body of his son at his feet. Officers of his court and other Egyptians bowing before him and wailing. Moses and Aaron at side.)

Egyptians (wailing)—O mighty Pharaoh, the God of Israel has smitten us again. Woe! woe! woe! Help us, mighty Pharaoh.

Pharaoh (to Moses and Aaron)—O mighty leaders of thy people Israel, no more shall thy God chastise us. Rise up and get thee forth from among my people,

both you and the children of Israel, and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. And also take your flocks and your herds. And bless me also, for my heart is heavy with grief. Behold, my son, my first-born, is dead. (Weeps.)

Moses (turning to go with Aaron)—Now, dost thou see the power of the God of Israel, and know why His children adore Him?

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE V.—THE SAME, SEVERAL DAYS LATER.

(Pharaoh upon the throne, surrounded by his officers.)

An Officer—O mighty Pharaoh, in the grief for thy son, hast thou forgotten the Israelites? Verily, they have all departed from us; they and their children, and their flocks and their herds; and there is none left to work for us.

Pharaoh—Verily, in my great grief, my heart was softened and I bade them to go. But they are vile dogs. They have tricked me into this thing.

Officer—Why have we done this, to let Israel go from serving us?

Pharaoh (rising)—Even though they be gone, yet shall they return. Only a few days have passed since they started on their pilgrimage. Therefore we will prepare chariots and swift horses, and pursue them, even to the Red Sea.

Officers (waving arms)—Yea, we will pursue them and bring them back to serve us.

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 11

THE GOLDEN CALF

CHARACTERS.

The Obedient Children of Israel (Levites).
The Rebellious Children of Israel.
Dancers.
Moses—Their Leader.
Aaron—Moses' Brother.

PROPERTIES.

Cymbals.
Manna (bits of cotton).
Platter on which to carry manna.
Calf of gold. (Made of clay and gilded. Fasten it to a stretcher so two men may carry it.)
Two tables of stone, which may be broken. (Made with mixture of plaster of Paris and water, which is poured into a box cover about 16 x 28 inches. The top should be rounded off with a knife.)
Two tables of stone which will not break. (Made of wood or cardboard in duplication of the others.)
Palms or green branches for dancers.
Swords for the rebellious children.
Flowers and garlands for the golden calf.

COSTUMES.

White and black should be the prevailing colors. Some may be of checkerboard design, and others with

bands of black on the white. Mantles are of bright colors—orange, red, purple, green.

MOSES should have white, flowing hair and beard. Most of the men should have short, black beards, if possible.

WOMEN wear more bright colors than men.

DANCERS wear white, flowing robes, with head-bands.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—A plain in the wilderness; the rebellious children.

SCENE II.—The same, several days later; the image is destroyed.

SCENE III.—The same, forty days later; God renews His covenant.

(Arrange the stage with a country scene or plain, blue back curtain. Tents at right and left made of striped canvas, if possible. Group of palm-trees behind each tent. Electric fan off stage will give suggestion of a breeze.)

SCENE I.—A PLAIN IN THE WILDERNESS.

The Levites, Obedient Children of Israel (enter, singing)—

God of Israel, hear our cry,
In this barren wilderness;
Evermore, O Lord, be nigh,
Evermore Thy people bless.
(Music "Gottschalk," by Parker.)

(Men hold hands toward heaven and the women cross arms on breast. They stoop to gather the manna, piling it on platter, as they continue singing:)

For the manna of to-day,
For the streams in our distress,
For thy guidance still we pray,
Evermore Thy people bless.

(Rebellious children enter during the singing and regard the Levites scornfully.)

First Rebel—Children of Levi, what is this ye do?

First Levite—We gather manna for the day, even as Jehovah hath commanded.

First Rebel—Manna! We sicken of it!

Second Rebel—Who shall give us flesh to eat?

Third Rebel—Do you remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely? Also the cucumbers and the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlic?

First Rebel—But now our soul is dried away; we have naught save this manna.

Second Rebel—Yea, the gods of Egypt were gods of plenty.

All the Rebels (with clenched fists)—Wherefore did we leave Egypt?

Levite (advancing)—Be ye ashamed, who rebel against the most high God.

All the Levites (with upraised arms)—O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men. For He hath brought forth His people with joy, and His chosen with singing.

Levite Woman (offering platter of manna)—Come, brother, eat of the manna and be filled. Then thou shalt render thanks to God most high.

Rebel (dashing platter to earth)—I thank Him for naught! [Levites shrink.] I would return and serve

the gods of Egypt, for while we abode there we had plenty.

All the Rebels—Wherefore did we leave Egypt?

First Levite—Have ye forgotten the cruel bondage in Egypt?

Second Levite—And how ye cried to Jehovah in your trouble?

Third Levite—And He delivered you from your distresses, for He sent unto us Moses, His servant, and Aaron, whom He had chosen.

First Rebel (angrily)—Where *is* Moses?

Levite—Thou knowest well that he is gone up into the mountain to pray. Let us await him yonder. (Points off left.)

All the Levites (going)—Aye, we will await for him by Mt. Sinai. For he hath brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with singing.

(Rebels stand, watching them disgustedly.)

First Rebel (looking off right)—Yonder cometh Aaron. Perhaps he will lead us back to Egypt. (All look, as Aaron enters slowly.)

All Rebels (arms outstretched)—O Aaron, up, up!

Second Rebel—Wilt thou, O Aaron, lead us back to Egypt? Make us gods which shall go before us. For as for this Moses, who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him.

Third Rebel—Forty days and nights is he departed from us.

Aaron—Ye know well that he prayeth on Mt. Sinai for the sake of Israel.

All Rebels—Let him pray!

First Rebel—Wilt thou, O Aaron, make for us a god like to the calf of Egypt?

Aaron (shaking head)—The thing is sin.

All Rebels (advancing and shaking fists)—Make us a god like to the calf of Egypt, lest we smite thee!

Aaron—If ye make me to sin, yours is the evil.

First Rebel—Verily, ours shall be the punishment thereof.

Aaron—Break ye off the golden rings which are in the ears of your wives and of your sons and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.

First Rebel (to others)—Go ye throughout the camp and bring the golden bracelets, rings and chains.

Rebels (going off)—We hasten.

First Rebel—Then we will make the golden image. We will make a god to guard us.

Aaron (sarcastically)—For the Lord Jehovah is a jealous God!

(From off stage comes the song of the Levites, "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah!" softly at first, then increasing in volume.)

Rebel (at beginning of song)—Hark to the singing!

Aaron—It is but the children of Levi who watch for Moses. Aye, it were better for us to serve in the land of Egypt than that we die here in the wilderness.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—SAME AS BEFORE, SEVERAL DAYS LATER.

(At rise of curtain the golden calf is brought in, followed by dancers, Aaron and the rebels. Music: "Cry of the Prophets of Baal," from Mendelssohn's "Elijah." Some of the dancers have palms or green

branches and garlands of flowers, and others have cymbals. Dancers surround the golden calf, which is held on the shoulders of the bearers, and dance to the music, swaying and clashing cymbals. When dance is finished, Aaron speaks.)

Aaron (sarcastically)—This is the god, O Israel, which brought you forth from the land of Egypt.

Dancers (bowing to calf)—Lo, we cry to thee!

First Rebel (bowing to calf)—Lead us back again to Egypt!

Dancers—Hear, O Serapis!

Second Rebel—Protect us from the wrath of Jehovah!

Dancers—Hear and answer us!

(Repeat dance, as at first. Group of Levites enter.)

First Levite—O men of Israel, why do ye bring the wrath of God upon us?

First Rebel—Of what god dost thou speak? *This* is the god of Israel.

First Levite (scornfully)—This? Was it this beast, made by your own hands, which brought you forth from the bondage of Egypt? Was it this brazen image which parted the waters of the Red Sea, so that ye might escape in safety, while Pharaoh and his host were destroyed?

First Rebel (madly)—Away with him! [Rebels advance with swords and force him back.] Bring forth the garlands and crown ye the golden calf!

(Dance is repeated, while garlands are placed upon the neck and body of calf. During the ceremony the rebels continue to raise arms in the air, then bow to the ground, chanting: "Hear, O Serapis! Hear and answer us!" While this is in progress, the Levites

stand by in disgust, occasionally covering faces with their hands and turning away. Then, suddenly, they catch sight of some one descending the mount, off left, and call one another's attention to it. At close of the dance, Aaron also follows the gaze of the Levites.)

Aaron (excitedly)—Aye, aye! Yonder cometh Moses!

Rebels and Levites (falling together)—Aye, aye! Moses, our leader!

(Moses enters slowly, carrying two tables of stone, one in each arm. Glances from people to calf.)

Moses (sternly)—What is this image that ye have fashioned?

First Rebel (falling before him)—O Moses, our great leader, we weary here in this wilderness. We thought thou hadst deserted us. So Aaron hath builded us a golden image, like unto the calf of Egypt.

Moses (to Aaron)—What did the people unto thee that thou hast brought such great sin upon them?

Aaron—Let not the anger of my lord wax hot! Thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me: "Make us gods which shall go before us, for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him." So I said, "Bring me your gold," and I cast it into the fire and there came out this calf. But it gives no answer to their prayers.

Moses—O wicked and accursed people! Shall this image be your god? Will it save you from starvation and destruction? [Lifts tables of stone.] Behold these tables of stone! Upon them Jehovah hath given His commandments. He hath made His covenant with you, while you have followed after the gods of Egypt!

First Rebel—Let us hear the reading of the laws!

People (advancing)—Aye, read unto us the laws of Jehovah!

(Moses lifts tables of stone and the people fall back.)

Moses (dashing tables to ground, where they shatter to fragments)—Ye are not worthy!

First Rebel—He hath destroyed the word of Jehovah!

People—The word of the Lord hath been destroyed!

First Levite (coming forward and picking up fragments of the tables)—He hath broken the commandments of our God!

Moses—Take ye the image of the beast and grind it to powder, and strew it upon the water and drink ye of it!

First Levite (approaching calf)—Verily, it shall be done.

First Rebel (advancing)—Ye shall not destroy this image! Our gold hath builded it!

Rebels (drawing their swords)—The image is ours! (They start to clash.)

Moses (lifting his hand, commandingly)—Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me!

Levites (flocking to Moses)—We are on the Lord's side!

Moses—Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord, even every man upon his son and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day. [Turning to rebels:] Ye have sinned a great sin, but I will speak unto the Lord and peradventure I shall make atonement for your sin.

(The people kneel before him, men with arms uplifted and women with arms crossed on breast.)

Moses (with uplifted arms)—O Lord, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt, forgive their sin; and, if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written. [He pauses, as if listening to the voice of God, then slowly lowers his arms and addresses the people.] Hew ye two tables of stone like to the first, and in the morning I will seek Mt. Sinai. Perhaps God will forget His wrath toward you this day and give again the law to Israel. (They depart.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—SAME AS BEFORE, FORTY DAYS LATER.

(Company of Levites assembled. Although it is daytime, flashes of lightning and sounds of thunder are heard in the distance. The Levites gaze in horrified silence.)

Woman—Oh, my brethren! what meaneth this lightning and thundering while the sun still shines in the heavens? Behold, I see a shining light upon Mt. Sinai.

First Levite—Be not fearful of the light, for it is God.

Second Woman—Is God upon Mt. Sinai?

First Levite—Verily He is speaking with Moses, our leader.

First Woman—He is angered because of the sin of our kinfolk who have rebelled against Him. (Rebels enter from various sides.)

First Rebel (after a brilliant flash)—God will blind us with His wrath!

First Levite—Have no fear, for God sendeth out His light and truth to lead us. His love enfoldeth us.

Second Levite—Behold, Moses cometh yonder! (All look eagerly.)

First Woman—His face shineth like unto the radiance of the sunlight!

All Levites—Ho! Moses, our leader, we greet thee!

Moses (entering with two tables of stone)—Ho! men of Israel. Beloved of the Lord, draw nigh! Rejoice and be glad, for God hath renewed His covenant! (They surround him.)

All Levites—Blessed be the name of the Lord, our God!

Moses (to rebels)—When I called unto the Lord to forgive your sins and restore again the commandments which were broken, He bade me to hew two tables of stone like unto the first and to seek Him again upon Mt. Sinai. Forty days and nights have I been in His presence. And He said unto me: "Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation. And all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord." [Holds up tables.] Read ye the law!

All (reading)—

Thou shalt have no other gods before me!

Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image!

Moses—Nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

All (reading)—Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain!

Moses—For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

All—Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy!

Moses—Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day. Wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

All—Honor thy father and thy mother.

Moses—That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

All—

Thou shalt not kill!

Thou shalt not commit adultery!

Thou shalt not steal!

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor!

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's!

Moses—These are the words which the Lord hath commanded, that ye should do them.

All (arms uplifted)—Blessed be His holy name forever!

Song—"Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah!"

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 12

A RASH VOW

CHARACTERS.

JEPHTHAH—A Man of Gilead.
ASAPH—His Father.
MARA—His Daughter.
EBID, ZEBUL } His Half-brothers.
PEOPLE OF MIZPAH.
GIRL FRIENDS OF MARA.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—A camp in Mizpah; Jephthah is banished.

SCENE II.—Jephthah's home in Tob; seeking a captain.

SCENE III.—An altar on the battlefield; Jephthah's vow.

SCENE IV.—Jephthah's home; an obedient daughter.

SCENE V.—A retreat in the mountains; a virgin's lamentations (tableau).

COSTUMES.

JEPHTHAH—A man of middle age, with dark hair and beard. In Scenes I. and II. he wears a flowing robe of dark cloth, with overdrapery of contrasting color. Bright turban. In remaining scenes he wears

a sleeveless tunic of brown, reaching nearly to the knees, and girded at the waist with a gold cord. Brown socks, with sandals laced high. An overdrapery, as in first scenes. Helmet made of an old derby hat painted white, with fan-shaped ornaments on each side. In Scenes III. and IV. he has a spear and a round shield.

Asaph—An old man with white hair and beard. Flowing robe of dark cloth, with overdrapery of contrasting color. White turban. In Scene IV. he leans forward upon a staff.

Ebid and Zebul—Costumes similar to Jephthah in Scenes I. and II.

People of Mizpah—Some of the men wear costumes like Asaph's; some wear the military costume like Jephthah's. Women wear flowing gowns of dark colors, with overdraperies and scarfs on head.

Mara—A young woman with flowing hair bound with ribbon and beads. Many bracelets on arms. Flowing robe of blue and white, girded at the waist. White scarf over head and falling back over shoulders.

Girl Friends of Mara—Flowing robes of light colors, with head-scarfs of contrasting colors. They have garlands of flowers.

Scene I.—A Camp in Mizpah.

(Tent, made of striped canvas, if possible, is at rear right. Group of tall palms at left. Electric fan off stage to give suggestion of a breeze. Asaph, Zebul, Ebid and Jephthah are standing in front of tent.)

Asaph—O my beloved sons, thou art a joy to me in mine old age. For, verily, thy brethren of Israel have sinned greatly against the Lord, and He has brought us through great chastisements.

Jephthah—Yea, we forsook Him in our sinfulness and followed after Baalim. But He has delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and is again become our rock and our salvation.

Ebid (scornfully)—How dost thou speak thus, thou son of an outcast? There is no peace within our tribe with the children of Ammon encamped around us.

Zebul—Yea, who knoweth when they shall turn upon us and attack us? Who is there among us that will lead the army of Israel?

Jephthah—Verily, if we follow God and obey His commandments, He will raise up a leader unto us and will save us from the oppressors.

Asaph (to Jephthah)—Thou art very courageous, my son, and a mighty man of valor. Trust in the Lord and thy father shall reward thee. (Exit into tent.)

Ebid (to Zebul)—What is this that our father hath said? Unto whom shall rewards and blessings be given?

Zebul—Thus he spake unto Jephthah.

Ebid—Shall we allow such a thing to come to pass? [Draws sword and rushes upon Jephthah, followed by Zebul.] Nay, thou shalt not inherit in our father's house, for thou art the son of a strange woman.

Zebul—Get thee away from the tents of our father and from our presence. (They skirmish and Jephthah flees, followed by his brothers.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—JEPHTHAH'S HOME IN TOB, SOME YEARS LATER.

(Use same background as Scene I., with house built of rough stones, in place of tent. The house has an

arched doorway. A well may be added, and more trees. Jephthah and Mara are seated. Ebid and Zebul enter with several other men.)

Ebid—Ho! Jephthah, our brother! At last we have come unto thy dwelling. [They bow.] Eight years have passed since thou didst leave us.

Jephthah (rising)—Did ye not hate me and drive me from my father's house? Therefore why should I return unto you?

Zebul—Verily, our hearts were angered through jealousy, and we did sin in thy sight and in the sight of our father.

Ebid—Who is the maiden we behold beside thee?

Jephthah—Dost thou not remember little Mara, who was the joy of our tents, when we abode with our father Asaph?

Ebid—Verily, she has grown into a woman, for the years have brought her from childhood.

Jephthah—She is the joy of my life, since her mother is departed from us. Come and bow to thy uncles, my daughter. (She obeys.)

Zebul—Thou art indeed rich, my brother, for her life is of more value than rubies. Verily, thou hast prospered in the years that have passed.

Ebid—But now the children of Ammon have made war against us. Come, therefore, and be our captain, that we may fight against them, for there is none so valiant as art thou.

Jephthah—Why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?

Zebul—Verily, there is none in all of Israel who hath the valor to be our captain. Therefore we turn to thee, that thou mayest go with us and fight against

the children of Ammon, and be our leader over the inhabitants of Gilead.

Jephthah—And if I go with thee and the Lord deliver us from the Ammonites, shall I be your head?

Zebul—The Lord be witness between us, if we do not so, according to thy words.

Jephthah (advancing)—Then will I go with thee, and may the Lord God give us a victory.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—AN ALTAR ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

(Country scene or plain drop. Altar in center, made of stones, upon which sacrifice is burning. Jephthah kneels by the altar. Asaph and several men of Mizpah standing near by. Dim light from fire on altar. This can be arranged by covering electric-light bulbs with red paper. It is night.)

Jephthah—O Lord God of Israel, who brought us out of the bondage of Egypt and hast led us through many years of wanderings to teach us Thy statutes, hear, I pray Thee, the vow of Thy servant. For, if Thou wilt deliver the children of Ammon into my hands, then it shall be that whatsoever cometh forth out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE IV.—JEPHTHAH'S HOME.

(Same setting as Scene II. Asaph and Jephthah enter from left.)

Jephthah—Welcome to the home of thy outcast son, O Asaph, my father. It has long been the target of the stones and curses of my neighbors. But to-day I cast aside my ancient shame and hatreds. My tribe that once cast me out will receive me with timbrels and songs of rejoicing. Nay, more; they will keep their bargain and I will rule as a king in Mizpah. (Stands with folded arms.)

Asaph—Thou art indeed a man of valor and a son in whom I can rejoice, O Jephthah. All of my hopes now lie in you and Mara, the last of our blood in Israel, seeing that you have no other child and all my other sons are dead.

Jephthah (raising arms)—Verily, I need but lift mine arms to receive victory, glory and praise before the sons of Gilead.

Asaph—And what of your vow?

Jephthah (shrugging shoulders)—Vows made in storms are forgotten in time of calm.

Asaph—Aye, but the vow which God has heard must be fulfilled.

Jephthah—He will not hold me to keep it, for in my fear and madness I knew not what I vowed.

Asaph—Aye, it was a rash vow, and unholy from the mouth of a son of Israel. O my son, I am fearful for you.

Jephthah (putting arm around Asaph)—Then thou must quiet thy fears and think only of my glory. The men of Gilead will soon be here to greet me. (Stands with back to the house.)

Mara (rushing out with tambourine)—Welcome home again, my father. I am the first to greet you.

Asaph (frantically)—Back! Back!

Jephthah (pushing her away as she tries to embrace him)—O my daughter! Return into the house. Why did you come forth?

Mara (amazed)—To bid you welcome. [Tries again to embrace him, as he turns away.] Father, look at me!

Jephthah (covering face with hands)—Oh, what have I done that God should hate me so?

Mara (falling at his feet)—O my father, will you not look at me?

Asaph (lifting her)—Fret not your father, for he is in anguish.

Mara—But I have not seen him for many months, and now—

Asaph—He is wearied with his many battles, for he returneth as a victor over the Ammonites.

(The people of Mizpah enter in festal procession, with garlands of flowers. Girl friends of Mara have timbrels.)

People (singing)—

Hail! all hail! for Jephthah is our king,
The hosts of Ammon from him fled;
And now to him with songs of joy
We let our happy voices ring.

One Man—O mighty Jephthah, we bow [all bow low] before thee to welcome thy return. (Rise.)

Another—Thou art mighty in battle and blessed of the Lord.

Jephthah (passionately)—Nay, my people and my friends, cease with your music and rejoicing, for my heart is heavy with sorrow.

Mara (falling upon knees before him)—O my father, what hidden grief doth trouble thee?

Jephthah (taking her face in his hands)—Alas! my daughter, you alone trouble me. For I have sworn and I dare not turn back.

Mara—But what have I done to displease thee?

Jephthah—It is not of thy acts that grief is come upon me. [To people:] You praise me for my victory in battles, but give instead your praise to God of Israel who led me on and gave to me the victory.

One Man—Surely we praise Him without measure for saving us through your hand.

Jephthah—Hear, then, how I bribed our God that He might lead us unto peace and victory. For I, Jephthah, son of Asaph, raised my hands to Him in the darkness and cried unto Him: "If Thou wilt indeed deliver the children of Ammon into my hand, whatsoever cometh out of my house to meet me when I return in peace, it shall be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering."

Mara (wringing hands)—O my father!

Jephthah—And as I came hither to-day my daughter was the first to greet me. [Passionately:] O men of Mizpah, tell me, must I keep such a vow, made in the madness of battle, when I knew not what I vowed? (Clasps his hands in anguish.)

One Man—Verily, my friends, Jephthah has fought for the Lord as no other man ever fought for Him before. Surely, with our sacred blood shed upon the battlefield, the Lord will wash out all remembrance of the vow which Jephthah made.

Jephthah—It was for your sake that I vowed, O my people; and, if I sinned, I sinned for your sake also. Therefore, if I fail in payment of my vow and the anger of God be kindled against Mizpah, will you

not bear it willingly, since it was I who saved you from the hand of Ammon?

Asaph—The vow that God has heard must be fulfilled.

Another Man—Then, if He does indeed demand a sacrifice, let me be slain upon the altar. I have lived my days and there are none to mourn for me, but the daughter of Jephthah is in the springtime of life.

Another Man—If God requires this child for a sacrifice, He will speak. But surely the maid is guiltless and must not die.

Mara (coming forward)—Cease thy pleadings, my friends, for I know that my father's vow must be fulfilled. [Advancing to him.] Father, since you have vowed unto the Lord, offering up my young life, even for the sake of Mizpah, then, do to me according to your vow.

Jephthah (hugging her passionately)—O my daughter, the light of my life, will you forgive me?

Mara (holding him off at arm's length)—Yea, my father, you knew not what you vowed. But death is a little thing and honor is great. The vow that God has heard must be fulfilled.

Maidens (crowding around her)—Nay, thou must not die! (They fall upon their knees in passionate wailing.)

Mara (lifting her arms)—Hearken, ye mountains, to our lamentations!

A Maiden (while others wail softly)—We will lament over your passing; we will grieve because thou must depart from us.

Jephthah (crying passionately)—My daughter! O my daughter!

Mara (taking his face between her hands)—O father, look once more upon my face. See—I am not afraid.

Jephthah—What will you ask of me as my last gift, my daughter?

Mara—But one thing do I ask of thee. Grant me that I may go with my companions up to the mountains to sojourn there while I grieve for my lost youth. Let me abide there two months with these maidens, and they will lament with me as for one already dead. Then will I return to Mizpah and you shall do to me according to your vow. [Jephthah nods, unable to speak, and embraces her silently; she turns to the maidens:] Come with me, my friends, and we will prepare for our journey. [They follow her silently into the house, but she turns back at the doorway.] In two months I shall return. (Exit.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE V.—A RETREAT IN THE MOUNTAINS.

(Masses of shrubbery at back and sides. Mara stands in center, with arms uplifted, surrounded by the maidens, upon their knees, and heads bowed. They keep up a low moaning, wailing while she speaks.)

Mara—Hearken, ye mountains, to my lamentations, and you, O hills, behold the tears of my eyes. Testify to the weepings of my soul and to the grief that is in me. I have not been granted the joy of marriage, nor have I been scented with perfume of myrrh. In the springtime is my life demanded and I must obey. (Tableau of colored lights.)

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 13

A FAITHFUL DAUGHTER

CHARACTERS.

ELIMELECH—A Man of Bethlehem.
NAOMI—His Wife.
RUTH, ORPAH } Their Widowed Daughters-in-law.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—Elimelech's home in Bethlehem; flight from famine.

SCENE II.—A garden in Moab, ten years later; faith and loyalty.

COSTUMES.

ELIMELECH—Man of middle age, with dark hair and beard. Robe of gray or dark blue, with overdrapery of contrasting color.

NAOMI—In Scene I. she is a woman of middle age, with dark hair. Robe of gray, with purple mantle. In Scene II. her hair is gray and she has a yellow scarf over head.

RUTH AND ORPAH—Women of middle age. Flowing robes of brown and black. Caps about six inches high, over which a veil is draped and hangs down back to shoulders.

SCENE I.—IN THE HOME OF ELIMELECH IN BETHLEHEM OF JUDAH.

(The room is small and bare, with heavy, dark curtains at doors and windows. A table, with bench and two chairs at center. Table is covered with dark cloth and a candle burns upon it. There also is a water-jar and several vases or dishes. Elimelech sits at table and Naomi enters from left.)

Naomi—Behold, thou art returned from thy journey, my husband, and verily thou art weary. Dost thou bring report of more deaths from the famine?

Elimelech—Aye, it is true that many have died, my beloved. Yet the God of Israel still reigns. I beseech thee to give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty.

Naomi (pouring water from jar)—Praise to Jehovah, we still have water for our thirst, but of food there is little, and the oil has well-nigh failed. How many days the famine lasteth!

Elimelech—Where are Mahlon and Chilion?

Naomi—They went forth early this morning in search of corn and oil, but they departed as those who have no hope. [Pleadingly:] Oh, my husband, wouldst thou be willing to leave this promised land, which is now so brown and bare with drouth, for a land that is rich with harvest?

Elimelech—What dost thou mean, Naomi? Wouldst thou have us leave this land which Jehovah hath chosen out of all the earth as His abiding place? But where is this land of which thou dost speak?

Naomi—It is the land of Moab, for word has come by the pilgrims that there are meat and grain there in abundance.

Elimelech—And how could we leave this land for a strange country where Jehovah is not known?

Naomi—Perchance the God of our fathers might go with us even there, and as His servants we might bring comfort to them that dwell in Moab. Then, consider the fate that may befall us here. This land no longer belongeth to us, for it is pledged to buy us food. Wouldst thou see thy sons die before thine eyes?

Elimelech (shaking his head)—Lo, the days of their boyhood are passed and they are men. If we go into Moab, they must take unto themselves strange wives who know not God.

Naomi—Perchance in that land of plenty we shall find wives for them who shall worship Jehovah, even as do the daughters of Israel. Did not our fathers, Abraham and Jacob, abide for many days in the land of Egypt during the famine, and was not the God of Israel with them?

Elimelech—Verily, thou hast a wonderful faith, my beloved. [Rising.] Therefore, let us prepare to go hence on the morrow, that we perish not in this sore famine.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—A GARDEN IN MOAB, TEN YEARS LATER.

(A few palms and flowers will be sufficient. Some large urns and a fountain will add to the effectiveness, and the back curtain should be a country scene. Ruth and Orpah are seated on a bench at back center.)

Orpah (weeping)—Never again shall I be happy, for my beloved husband has been taken from me, stricken down with the fever.

Ruth (trying to comfort her)—My sorrow is like unto thine, my sister, for Mahlon, my husband, also is dead.

Orpah—Dost thou think, my sister, that our god, Chemosh, is angry with us because we chose these men of Israel to be our husbands?

Ruth—Nay, it can not be, for we have not forsaken his worship. We have gone every feast-day to his altars with gifts. But we must cease to mourn, for is not Naomi, our gentle mother-in-law, still with us? Verily, she has taught us many things concerning Jehovah, the God of her fathers, in the land of Israel.

Orpah—Perchance this sorrow hath come upon us because we have listened to the teachings of her God. But, in truth, He seemeth to be a kindly God, different, indeed, from our cruel Chemosh.

Ruth—It seemeth strange that a God of such kindness should deal so bitterly with one who is so faithful in her worship as Naomi, for not only have her sons been taken from her, but her husband also.

Orpah—Nevertheless, methinks I like Him better than our angry Chemosh. And now, yonder, cometh Naomi herself. (Both weep.)

Naomi (approaching them)—O my daughters, it grieveth me much because ye are so sad. But do not I also share the anguish of your hearts? Yea, and more, for years ago, when I first came into the land of Moab, God took away my husband, and now my sons also have died. Alas! I can no longer tarry in this land of sorrow.

Ruth—That is true indeed, mother beloved, but thou hast taught us that thy God is merciful to all, and we sorrow not as those who have no hope.

Orpah—And dost thou think of leaving Moab and returning to thy people?

Naomi (nodding)—Yea, I have heard how the Lord hath visited His people, Israel, in giving them bread. And now that I am growing old, my heart yearns for mine own people, and I am minded to return unto them in Bethlehem.

Orpah—And wilt thou leave us alone in our sorrow?

Ruth—If thou dost return, we will go with thee.

Naomi—Nay, my daughters, go, return each of you to her mother's house. The Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The Lord grant you that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. (Kisses the girls and they weep.)

Orpah (placing her hand on Naomi's shoulder)—Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.

Naomi—Turn again, my daughters; go your way; for I am too old to have a husband. It grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.

(Ruth and Orpah weep. Orpah kisses Naomi and starts off, stopping to look back. Ruth puts her arm around Naomi.)

Naomi—Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people and unto her gods; return thou after her.

Ruth—Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 14

A MOTHER'S GIFT

CHARACTERS.

ELKANAH—A Resident of Ramah.
HANNAH } His Wives.
PENINNAH }
SONS AND DAUGHTERS of Peninnah.
SAMUEL—Hannah's Son.
ELI—The Priest and Judge.
ANGEL OF THE LORD.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—In the temple at Shiloh; Hannah prays for a son.

SCENE II.—The same, seven years later; Samuel dedicated to the Lord.

SCENE III.—The same, six years later; the call in the night.

SCENE IV.—The same, next morning; Samuel informs Eli.

COSTUMES.

ELKANAH—A man of middle age, with dark hair and beard. Flowing robe of white, with overdrapery of bright color. Turban.

HANNAH AND PENINNAH—Women of middle age. Flowing gowns of bright colors. Scarfs over head.

Eli—An old man with white hair and beard. Flowing robe of white, with girdle and necktie of bright-blue silk. White turban, coiled high.

Samuel—Two boys are necessary to represent this character. In Scene II. he is a child of six years, wearing tunic of white, and sandals. In Scenes III. and IV. he is twelve years of age, with similar costume; blue scarf around shoulders.

Scene I.—In the Temple at Shiloh.

(Walls and doors hung with draperies. Eli seated by the altar. Candlesticks burning on each side. Sacrifice burning on the altar. Elkanah is kneeling in front of altar. Peninnah and her children at one side of him, and Hannah at the other side, weeping.)

Elkanah—Hannah, why weepest thou and why is thy heart grieved? Am not I better to thee than ten sons?

Hannah (disregarding him)—O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look upon the affliction of thy handmaid, and give unto me a man-child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

Eli (coming down and standing by her)—Shame unto thee, in the temple of the Lord! How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee.

Hannah—Nay, my lord Eli, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.

Eli (placing his hand on her head)—Go thou, then, in peace, and may the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of Him.

Hannah (rising with Elkanah)—Let thy handmaid find grace in thy sight. (They all go.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—SAME AS BEFORE, SEVEN YEARS LATER.

(Hannah and Samuel, now a child of six years, are before the altar. Eli seated on high seat behind altar. Hannah has a dead bullock, a sack of flour and a bottle of wine with her.)

Eli—From whence comest thou to worship?

Hannah—O my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here some seven years ago, praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition. Therefore I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. And I have called his name Samuel, "the asked of God."

Eli (stretching out his hands over them)—And may the Lord abundantly bless his ministry throughout all his days.

Hannah (praying joyfully)—

My heart rejoiceth in the Lord;
Mine horn is exalted in the Lord,
Because I rejoice in Thy salvation;
There is none holy as the Lord,
For there is none besides Thee,
Neither is there any rock like our God.
The Lord killeth and maketh alive;
He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.

The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich:
He bringeth low and lifteth up.
He will keep the feet of His saints,
And the wicked shall be silent in darkness,
For by strength shall no man prevail.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—SAME AS BEFORE, SIX YEARS LATER.

(Eli supposedly asleep on couch, which is partly concealed by draperies behind the altar. Samuel, aged twelve, is sleeping on a couch down stage at right. Angel of the Lord appears at left, stepping between curtains which cover doorway.)

Angel (calling)—Samuel, hear me!

Samuel (awaking and rubbing eyes, runs to Eli)—Here am I, for thou calledst me.

Eli (awaking and sitting up)—I called thee not; lie down again. (Samuel obeys, and sleeps. Soft music.)

Angel—Samuel!

Samuel (awaking and going to Eli)—Here am I, for thou didst call me.

Eli—I called not, my son; lie down again. (Obeys as before.)

Angel—Samuel!

Samuel (awaking and going to Eli)—Here am I, for thou didst call me.

Eli (placing hands upon Samuel's shoulders)—Nay, I did not call thee, my son. Surely it is the voice of the Lord that thou hearest. But go, lie down again; and it shall be that, if He call thee again, thou shalt say: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." (Obeys.)

Angel—Samuel! Samuel!

Samuel (sitting up)—Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.

Angel—Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. For I have declared unto Eli that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. Therefore, I have sworn unto the house of Eli that the iniquity of his house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever. (Vanishes.)

(Samuel sits a moment in thought, then lies down again.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE IV.—SAME AS BEFORE, NEXT MORNING.

(Samuel awakens, rubs eyes, opens windows and doors, letting in a flood of light. Starts to awaken Eli several times, but can not get the courage to tell him the vision. Finally he sits on the couch with face in his hands.)

Eli (appearing before the curtain)—Samuel, my son!

Samuel (jumping up)—Here am I.

Eli—What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me. God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide anything from me of all the things that He hath said unto thee.

Samuel—Behold, He called me the third time, before I slept in peace, and He said unto me: "I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. For I have declared unto Eli that I will judge his house forever for the

iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

Eli (bowing his head)—It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good.

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 15

THE SHEPHERD KING

CHARACTERS.

Samuel—A Prophet of Israel.
Saul—The King.
Jonathan—Saul's Son.
Merab
Michal } Saul's Daughters.
David—A Shepherd Boy.
Jesse—His Father.
Nathan—A Prophet.
Seven Sons of Jesse.
Two Servants for Saul.
Elders of Bethlehem.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

Scene I.—The temple in Bethlehem; David anointed.

Scene II.—A room in the palace; David plays before Saul.

Scene III.—The same, several weeks later; Saul envies David.

Scene IV.—A temple in Hebron, ten years later; the shepherd king.

COSTUMES.

Samuel—An old man with long, white hair and beard. Flowing robe of white, with scarf of dark blue around shoulders.

Saul—Man of middle age, with dark hair and beard. Robe of light brown, with cape of purple, lined with yellow sateen. Crown.

Jonathan—A young man of about twenty. White tunic of knee length, with scarf of bright color around shoulders. Bare legs; sandals.

David—A lad of about seventeen, with ruddy countenance. In Scene I. he wears a shepherd's costume—a tunic of brown toweling, reaching just below the knees and made without sleeves, tied at waist with cord. In Scene II. he wears a scarf over this tunic. In Scene III., the same. In Scene IV. he wears Saul's costume, being an older man, with dark beard.

Jesse—An old man with white hair and beard. Flowing robe of white, with mantle of bright color around shoulders.

Jesse's Sons—Men of varying ages, some with dark beards and some with smooth faces. Tunics of varying lengths, with scarfs of different colors.

Nathan—The man having the part of Samuel may also have this part.

Elders of Bethlehem—Flowing robes of dark material, with scarfs of varying colors. Caps made in hood effect. Beards.

Merab and Michal—Flowing gowns of dainty colors. Dark hair. Beads and bracelets.

Scene I.—The Temple in Bethlehem.

(Walls and doors are hung with rich draperies. Altar at back center, on which sacrifice is burning. Tall candlesticks on each side. Samuel stands behind the altar. The elders of Bethlehem, with Jesse and

all his sons, except David, are assembled in front of altar.)

Samuel—We have come hither at the bidding of the Lord to anoint a king from among the sons of Jesse.

People—Blessed be the prophet whom the Lord hath sent to serve us.

Samuel—And now, O Jesse, wilt thou cause thy sons to pass before me, that I may judge of their worthiness?

Jesse (coming forward with Eliab)—Behold, I bring to thee my eldest son, Eliab. (Bows.)

Samuel—Verily, he is of great stature, like unto Saul, the king, and he has a beautiful and kindly countenance. Surely the Lord's anointed is before us. (People nod heads and make approving gestures.)

Angel (slipping in and speaking to Samuel)—Samuel, look not upon his countenance, nor on the height of his stature; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. (Vanishes.)

Samuel (shaking head)—But the Lord hath revealed to me that this is not His chosen man. [People groan.] Therefore, O Jesse, wilt thou bring before me another of thy sons?

(Jesse brings forward Abinadab, then Shammah, Nathaneel, Raddar, Ozem and Bashan, each in turn, introducing them to Samuel, who looks carefully at them, shaking his head against each, with some remark as to their unworthiness, such as "The light of God shineth not in his face;" "His eyes behold not the glory of the Lord;" "The God of Israel doth not call him;" "Nay, he is not the chosen, for the Lord hath not blessed him.")

Samuel—And now, O Jesse, are these all thy sons?

Jesse—There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep.

Samuel—Send and fetch him, for we will not sit down till he come hither.

(Jesse speaks in pantomime to Raddar, who goes after David. Curtain drops a few moments to denote lapse of time.)

Angel (to Samuel, as David enters)—Arise, anoint him, for this is he.

Jesse—Before thee stands my youngest son, David.

Samuel—Verily, the Lord hath spoken to me that thou art His chosen. (The other brothers clench fists and groan in jealousy.)

People—Behold, the chosen of the Lord.

Samuel (takes horn of oil and steps down in front of altar)—And now, O David, beloved of the Lord, I do herewith anoint thee [pours oil on his head] in the presence of thy father and thy brethren and the elders of this city. [Raises hands to heaven in blessing.] May the Spirit of God be upon thee, and upon thy house, and upon thy people now and for evermore. (David kneels during the anointing.)

[CURTAIN.]

Scene II.—Saul's Room in the Palace.

(Make the setting as rich and elaborate as possible. A couch is in one corner. A guard stands by door at each side of room. Servants try to comfort Saul, who walks the floor, tearing his hair, as if possessed with an evil spirit. Merab, Michal and Jonathan also with their father, trying to comfort him.)

First Servant—Behold, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee because thou hast turned thy face from Him.

Second Servant—Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man who is a cunning player on the harp, and he shall play before thee and thou shalt be well.

Saul (nodding)—Provide me now a man that can play well and bring him to me.

First Servant—Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, who is cunning in playing, and a mighty, valiant man, and the Lord is with him.

Saul—Then go quickly to Jesse and bid him send me David, his son, which is with the sheep, for my soul is torn asunder with evil. (Servant bows and goes.)

(Draw curtain a moment to denote lapse of time.)

Servant (entering with David, who carries a harp; servant has bread and bottle of wine)—Behold, O King Saul, here is the lad for whom thou didst send.

(David bows on one knee. He appears timid and regards with awe the beauty of the room.)

Saul (placing hands upon David's shoulders)—O thou, my son, who art favored of the Lord, I have sent for thee that thou might cheer my soul which is heavy with sorrow.

David (rising)—O my king, it is good to come into thy presence. May Jehovah, our God, give thee peace. And now, I pray thee, accept these gifts of wine and bread which my father Jesse hath sent thee. (Servant hands him the gifts.)

Saul (taking the gifts and placing them on a table)—I receive the gifts of thy father with thanksgiving

and may the peace of Jehovah abide over his house. Wilt thou now come and sing for me, that my soul also may be quieted?

(Saul sits upon couch and David sits upon low stool at his feet. He plays and sings "The Lord Is My Shepherd." His playing may be only in pantomime, the real music being rendered behind the stage. Saul sits for a time, spellbound, then rests.)

Saul (when song is finished)—Verily, peace has come to my soul again, because of thy sweet singing. Now, how can I ever let thee depart from me? Come, I pray thee, and abide in my house, and I will make thee to be my armor-bearer.

David—O my king, thou art good unto me. But how can I leave my father and my mother and my brethren which are in Bethlehem? And what shall the sheep do without their shepherd? For thy servant doth tend the sheep of his father.

Saul—Behold, I will send unto thy father and will tell him that I have need of thee. Then shalt thou delight also in the presence of my daughters Merab and Michal, and my son Jonathan. Now play again for me upon thy harp, that perchance I may sleep.

(David plays, but does not sing. Saul soon sleeps. Merab and Jonathan slip out. Michal and David exchange shy glances and smiles. He finally slips over to her side, while he continues to play.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—SAME AS BEFORE, SEVERAL WEEKS LATER.

(Saul is pacing the floor, wringing his hands. Servants stand near. Jonathan, Merab and Michal with their father.)

Jonathan—O my father, why art thou angry with David? Dost thou not remember how he saved Israel from the Philistines by slaying their champion, the mighty Goliath?

Saul (fiercely)—Bah! will I never hear the end of that matter? Even the dancers did sing of his valor as he returned from the battle. They ascribed unto David ten thousands, but unto me they ascribed only a thousand.

Jonathan—Verily, if he had not slain the giant, we all at this moment might be prisoners of the Philistines. Surely David is worthy of all these praises.

Saul—And have I not made him captain over the men of war? If I give him more, he will want the whole of my kingdom.

Michal (caressing him)—Surely, my father, thou dost not forget the pledge thou didst make to him who would slay the Philistine. Aye, thou didst even promise him thy daughter Merab.

Saul (nodding)—And the king's promise shall be kept, because I have sworn it. My soul hath been stirred with the pangs of jealousy. [To servants:] Wilt thou go and summon David, that he may play upon the harp again for me? (Servants go.)

Merab—O my father, how canst thou keep a promise to give me for wife unto David? Dost thou forget that I have already been pledged unto Adriel the Meholathite? And hast thou forgotten the valor by which he did win me?

Saul (sadly)—Verily, thy betrothal had passed my memory. Woe is come upon me! How, then, can I keep the promise I have made unto him who would slay the Philistine giant?

Merab—There is still my sister, Michal, whose heart has gone out to the hero David. And, if mine eyes do not deceive me, there also is love in his heart for her.

Saul (nodding)—Thou hast observed wisely, my daughter. So shall it be. [To David, who enters with servants:] Come unto me, my son, that I may bestow upon thee the gifts which are added to thee because of the king's promise. [David advances.] Behold my daughter Michal, whom I give thee to wife. Only be thou valiant for me and fight the Lord's battles.

David—Who am I, and what is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?

First Servant—Behold, the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee; now, therefore, be the king's son-in-law.

David—Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man, with no gifts to bring?

Saul—My son, thy king desireth not any dowry, but only a hundred swords of the Philistines, to be avenged of mine enemies.

David (smilingly, with a side glance at Michal)—Verily, O king, if that be all that thou dost require, thy dowry shall be speedily forthcoming.

Saul (leading David and Michal together)—Then, unto thee I do give my youngest daughter, whose countenance is fair and whose love is fervent, and may thy lives be blessed by the Lord Jehovah. Now, wilt thou come and play for me upon thine harp?

David (taking harp and sitting at foot of couch)—Thy servant is always willing to sing for thee, O my king.

(He sings same selection as before, or any other desired. Saul paces the floor, with occasional jealous glances at him. The others stand around, or sit, enjoying the music. Suddenly Saul takes a javelin from his garment and is about to cast it at David, when Jonathan springs forward and grabs his arm. David has observed the attempt to kill him and flees from the room, followed by the two girls, who scream. Servants also flee, only Jonathan remaining.)

Jonathan—O my father, why didst thou attempt this thing? Why shouldst thou, who art the king, sin against David, thy servant, who hath not sinned against thee? Verily, he has done only good in thy sight. He did even put his life in his hand when he slew the Philistine giant, and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all of Israel. Thou didst see it and rejoice. Wherefore, then, wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?

Saul (nodding)—Thou dost speak words of wisdom, Jonathan, my son. As the Lord liveth [crosses arms over breast] he shall not be slain. (Bows head.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE IV.—A TEMPLE IN HEBRON.

(Arranged similar to Scene I. Nathan is behind the altar. David stands directly in front of altar. Elders of Bethlehem and David's brothers also assembled. A company of Israelites also may be present. Have as large a group as possible.)

Nathan (lifting his arms)—Behold, we are assembled in the presence of the Lord to anoint him who shall be king over us.

People—David, the chosen of the Lord, is with us!

Nathan (to David)—In times past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and brought in Israel; and the Lord said unto thee: "Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel." Verily, thou art the chosen of the Lord [steps forward with horn of oil], and in His name do I herewith anoint thee to be king of Israel, and place upon thee the crown of this nation. (Use crown worn by Saul. Lifts hands in blessing.)

People—Hail to our valiant and glorious king! (Raise arms.)

[CURTAIN.]

(NOTE.—If desired to shorten the play, Scenes I. and IV. may be omitted.)

STORY 16

A GIANT STORY

CHARACTERS.

SAUL—King of Israel.
JONATHAN—His Son.
ABNER—Captain of the Host.
DAVID—A Shepherd Boy.
ELIAB, ABINADAB, SHAMMAH } His Older Brothers.
SEVERAL SOLDIERS.
A SERVANT.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—On the battlefield; David defies Goliath.
SCENE II.—The same, at evening; a mighty warrior.

COSTUMES.

SAUL—A man of middle age, with dark hair and beard. Tunic of light brown, reaching below knees. Cape of purple, lined with yellow satine. Bare legs and sandals. Helmet. The latter can be made from an old derby hat, painted white, with fan-shaped ornament made of paper, in front.

JONATHAN—A young man of about twenty-one. Costume similar to Saul's, but no beard.

ABNER—Costume similar to Saul's, with cape of dark brown lined with yellow.

DAVID—A lad of about eighteen, with ruddy countenance. Tunic of brown toweling, reaching just below knees and made without sleeves; it is tied at waist with a cord. Dark hair and no head-covering. Has a shepherd's staff and also a bag and slingshot fastened to waist.

DAVID'S BROTHERS AND THE SOLDIERS—Costumes similar to Abner's, with capes of different colors. Dark beards.

SERVANT—A young man with brown tunic similar to David's.

SCENE I.—KING SAUL'S QUARTERS ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

(This can be easily arranged by setting up a large, brown army tent, or simply by hanging pieces of striped canvas or ticking, to represent the front of a tent. Tall palms or branches of trees arranged at back and sides of stage. Use country or mountain scene for background, if available. An electric fan off stage will give indication of breeze. Several soldiers standing around, including Eliab, Abinadab and Shammah, the three latter talking in a group at left. Saul and Abner stand in front of tent, talking. Jonathan at one side.)

Eliab—Have ye seen this Philistine who is come up near our camp—this giant who has defied the armies of the living God?

Abinadab—Who has seen him?

Soldier—I have seen him as he crossed over the valley of Elah. He is a mighty giant, the like of such has never been known. His height is six cubits and a span. His helmet is of brass and he is armed with a

coat of mail. He has greaves of brass upon his legs and a javelin of brass between his shoulders. The staff of his spear is like a weaver's beam, and its head weighs six hundred shekels of iron.

Shammah—Verily, he is a mighty warrior.

Soldier—Our men are truly afraid. They flee as he approacheth.

(David runs in and salutes his brothers. He carries sacks of parched corn, small loaves of bread and cheeses.)

Shammah—Ho, David, our brother! How cometh it that thou art here?

Eliab (angrily)—I thought we left thee tending the sheep.

Abinadab—What news dost thou bring of our father Jesse?

David—Lo, the Philistine has been encamped forty days, so my father commanded me, saying: "Take now for thy brethren a sack of parched grain and these ten loaves, and run to the camp of thy brethren. And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare." So I left the sheep with a keeper and came as my father commanded. (Brothers take the food eagerly.)

Soldier (pointing right)—Behold, the giant, yonder! (All look.)

David (boldly)—Who is this Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?

Eliab (angrily)—Bah! thou shouldst be tending the sheep in the wilderness. But thou art come down that thou might see the battle.

David—What have I now done? [Turns to soldiers:] What shall be done with the man that killeth

this Philistine and taketh away the reproach from Israel?

Saul (coming forward)—I know not what we can do. Have we no man among us with the strength or boldness to fight this giant? Verily, the man that killeth him I will endow with great riches, and will give him my daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

David (saluting the king)—Let no man's heart fail because of this giant; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. (Soldiers look at each other in amazement.)

Saul (shaking his head)—Thou art not able to go against this giant, for thou art but a youth and he is a man of war.

David—Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and when there came a lion or a bear and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after him and smote him and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he rose up against me I caught him by the beard and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear, and this Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. The Lord hath delivered me out of the paw of the lion and of the bear; He will deliver me out of the hand of the Philistine.

Saul—Then go, and the Lord go with thee. [To soldiers:] Bring forth armor so that the youth may be prepared to meet the foe.

(Soldiers enter tent and return immediately with armor, which they arrange upon David. He walks a few steps, then throws down the sword and begins to take off armor. Soldiers stand aside, laughing at his efforts.)

David—I can not go with these, for I have not proved them. [Picks up his shepherd's staff and sling.] The Lord hath delivered me from the lion and the bear; He will deliver me from the Philistine giant. (Exit, while others stand amazed.)

Saul (to Abner)—Whose son is this youth?

Abner (shaking head)—As my soul liveth, O king, I can not tell.

Saul—Then wilt thou inquire round about and report to me.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—SAME AS BEFORE, LATER IN THE DAY.

(Saul is seated in front of tent, with servant standing near. They are eagerly watching the returning soldiers.)

Servant—O King Saul, my master, yonder cometh the shepherd lad, with Abner, captain of the host.

Saul (rising, as shouts draw nearer)—Behold, the conqueror returns.

Servant—Behind them also are soldiers of the army.

(Abner and David enter, followed by soldiers. David carries Goliath's head and sword. The head is made of a bag of cloth, filled with cotton or rags, with a false face on one side, and black yarn attached to back and top, for hair. He carries the head by the hair. Some strands of red yarn may be fastened at the neck to represent dripping blood.)

Abner (bowing)—Verily, O king, the lad is a mighty warrior, for, behold, he bringeth thee the head of the giant Philistine. (Holds it up.)

Soldiers (shouting)—He has overcome and slain the monster of our enemies.

Saul (placing his hands upon David's shoulders)—Thou art indeed a brave warrior, my lad, for I have stood here on the hilltop and saw thee battle with the Philistine. [Sits.] Now, I pray thee, tell us how thou didst accomplish the victory.

David—It was through no power of my own that I slew the giant, but because the Lord Jehovah was with me to deliver me from evil, as He has in all the days of my youth.

Saul—But how didst thou overcome him without a sword?

David—Verily, as I passed over the brook in the valley I selected five smooth stones which I placed here in my shepherd's bag, and went forward with my sling in mine hand.

And as the Philistine drew near he cursed me and said: "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? Come to me and I will give thy flesh to the fowls of the air and to the beasts of the field."

Then did I reply unto him, saying: "Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand, and I will smite thee and take thy head from thee, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel."

Abner (interrupting him, excitedly)—And it came to pass, O king, when the giant rose and came to meet the lad, that the lad ran forward also to meet him, and the lad took a stone and threw it with his sling [makes motion of throwing stone with a sling] and smote the Philistine upon the forehead, so that he fell upon his face to the earth. Then the lad ran and

stood upon the body of the giant, and took the giant's sword and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead they all fled.

Jonathan—And unto him, O king, my father, thou hast promised great rewards. (Embraces David and stands with arm around him.)

Saul (nodding, speaks to David)—Whose son art thou, young man?

David—I am David, the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite.

Saul (recollecting)—Aha! verily, it is the same lad who came unto me in days past and brought peace to my soul by his playing upon the harp. Of a certainty, I did not know him. And now, young man, thou hast proven thy worth to me this day. I can not again let thee return to tend thy father's sheep, and surely he will let thee abide with me when he knoweth that the king hath greater things for thee. Now, I will set thee over all my men of war if thou wilt abide with me.

David (nodding)—O king, thou art good unto thy servant, and I will do thy will in all things.

Saul (standing and lifting his arms)—Then hear ye, all my soldiers and servants: This day do I set David of Bethlehem to be commander over all my men of war, and whatsoever he saith unto you, that shall ye also obey, for he is a son in mine house.

A Soldier—Blessed be David of Bethlehem, who hath delivered us from the Philistine giant.

Jonathan (putting his robe and sword on David)—As thou art a son to my father, so shalt thou be a brother unto me, for I will give my life to save thee.

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 17

A WISE KING

CHARACTERS.

Solomon—Elect of the Lord.
David—His Father.
Nathan—The Prophet.
Zadok—The Priest.
Two Other Priests.
Queen of Sheba.
Angel of the Lord.
Princes, Captains, Elders.
Two Women.
Two Servants.
Four Maiden Attendants of the Queen.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

Scene I.—The temple in Jerusalem; Solomon anointed king.

Scene II.—The tabernacle at Gibeon; Solomon asks for wisdom.

Scene III.—The temple in Jerusalem; judgment between two women.

Scene IV.—The new temple in Jerusalem; the dedication.

Scene V.—Throne-room in the palace; the Queen of Sheba's visit.

COSTUMES.

SOLOMON—Three persons will be necessary to portray him in three ages. In Scenes I. and II. he is a lad of about fifteen years, with a tunic of white cloth reaching just below knees, and made with short sleeves; bare legs and sandals. In Scene II. he wears a purple robe or cape over this tunic. In Scene III. he is a young man of twenty-five, with rich, embroidered robe and gold crown. In Scenes IV. and V. he appears as an older man, with long, white hair and beard; wears robe of David. The man portraying David may take this part, if desired.

DAVID—An old man with long, gray hair and beard. Robe of royal purple, trimmed with ermine and gold. High turban of yellow.

NATHAN—Has no speaking part. An old man with long, gray hair and beard. Robe of dark blue, with overdrapery of red. Head-dress of white and blue, made in hood effect.

ZADOK—Flowing robe of white, with long sleeves. Girdle of bright-blue silk and necktie of same. Dark beard. White turban.

Two PRIESTS—Costumes similar to Zadok's.

QUEEN—An elaborate robe of white, trimmed with lace and jewels. Veil of lace hangs down her back, making long train, which her maidens hold.

PRINCES, CAPTAINS, ELDERS—All wear flowing robes of bright material, with turbans. Princes in white, with capes of purple and yellow. Elders with heavy robes and hoods. Captains have short spears. All wear beards of black or brown. Women may take these parts if men are not available.

Queen's Maidens—Short gowns of delicate colors. Head-scarfs.

Servants—White tunics of knee length, made without sleeves.

Two Women—Robes of white, with bright scarfs. Flowing hair.

Scene I.—The Temple in Jerusalem.

(Make the setting as rich as possible, with draperies and rugs. Altar at back center, with candlesticks on each side, in large holders. Zadok and Nathan stand behind altar. David and the boy Solomon stand at one side of the room. Assembled in front of altar are the princes, captains and elders of Israel.)

David—Hear me, my brethren and my people, we have come into the presence of the Lord this day to anoint him who shall be king over Israel; for the days are nigh when I shall go the way of all the earth.

People (lifting arms)—Great and glorious is David our king!

David—As for me, I had it in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building.

But God said unto me: "Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood."

And of all my sons—for the Lord hath given me many sons—He hath chosen Solomon to sit upon the throne over Israel.

And the Lord said also unto me: "Solomon shall build my house and I will establish his kingdom for-

ever, if he be faithful to do my commandments, as at this day."

An Elder (stepping forward)—Solomon shall be our king and he shall follow in the way of the Lord.

Zadok (comes forward and anoints Solomon, who kneels)—In the name of the Lord Jehovah, God of our fathers, I anoint thee to be the king over Israel, and may His blessing attend thee for evermore. (Solomon stands again.)

David—And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts and understandeth all thoughts; if thou seek Him, He will be found of thee, but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever. [Places his crown upon Solomon, who kneels.]

Be strong and of good courage; fear not nor be dismayed, for the Lord God will be with thee; He will not forsake thee until thou hast finished all the work of the house of the Lord. [Solomon stands.]

[To the people:] Now, Solomon, my son, is yet young and tender, and the work is great; for the palace is not for man, but for the Lord.

Now, I have prepared with all my might the gold, the silver, the brass, the iron, the wood, glistening stones of many colors, and marble in abundance.

Who, then, is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?

All the People (raising their arms)—We all will serve the Lord.

One Group—Five thousand talents of gold.

Another—Ten thousand talents of silver.

Another—Eighteen thousand talents of brass.

Another—One hundred thousand talents of iron.

Another—We will give more precious jewels.

David (lifting arms in prayer)—Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel, for ever and ever.

Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine.

Now, therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name.

But who are we that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.

I know also, my God, that Thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, I have willingly offered all these things; and now have I seen with joy Thy people, which are present here to offer willingly unto Thee. Amen.

[To the people:] Now, my people, bless the Lord your God. (All bow their heads to the floor.)

[CURTAIN.]

Scene II.—In the Tabernacle at Gibeon.

(Use same setting as before, with altar at one side of room instead of at back. Solomon enters and bows before the altar. Angel appears behind altar.)

Angel—Ask what I shall give thee.

Solomon—O Lord God, Thou hast showed great mercy to David, my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead.

Now, O Lord God, let Thy promise unto David, my father, be established; for Thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude.

Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before the people; for who can judge this Thy people, that is so great?

Angel—Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth or honor, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, to judge my people, over whom I have made thee king. Therefore, wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM.

(Same as Scene I. Solomon, the young man of twenty-five, stands before the altar, making a sacrifice. Two women enter, one with a tiny babe.)

First Woman—O my king, this woman and I dwell in the same house, and one day I bare a child. The third day she also bare a child, and there was no one with us in the house.

And this woman's child died in the night because she overcovered it. And she arose at midnight and took my child from beside me, while I was sleeping, and laid it in her bosom, and laid the dead child in my bosom.

And when I arose in the morning to nurse my child, it was dead; but when I had considered it, behold, it was not my son, which I did bare.

Second Woman (who has the child)—Nay, but the living is my son and the dead is thy son.

Solomon (to temple boy)—Bring me a sword. [He gets it.] Now, divide the living child in two and give half to the one woman and half to the other.

First Woman (falling upon knees and pleading passionately)—O my king, give her the living child and in nowise slay it.

Second Woman (handing the babe to Solomon)—Let it be neither thine nor mine, but divide it.

Solomon—Give her the living child and in nowise slay it, for she is the mother thereof.

(Mother takes child and kisses it frantically.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE IV.—IN THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM.

(Similar to Scene I., but more elaborate. Zadok and two other priests behind the altar. Solomon stands beside it. Princes, captains and elders assembled in front of it.)

Solomon (addresses the people and prays according to 1 Kings 8:15-62).

(At intervals during the prayer the people raise their arms toward heaven and say, "Amen, Amen.")

SCENE V.—THE THRONE-ROOM IN THE PALACE.

(Use same background as in other scenes, with a raised platform at back center, on which are two chairs of elaborate carving. Solomon is seated with a servant on each side, fanning him with large fans on long sticks. At rise of curtain the queen enters, preceded by four servants. They stand, two on each side, making an aisle for her to pass to the king. The king rises

to meet her and takes her hand to assist her up the steps. Music during this entry.)

Solomon—Welcome again into the palace of King Solomon and the people of Israel, O thou great and glorious queen.

Queen (seated)—These many days have I been thy guest, O King Solomon, and the time of my departure to mine own land and my own people draweth nigh. Thou hast been exceedingly gracious unto me.

Verily, it was a true report that I heard of thy acts and of thy wisdom. But I believed not the words until I came and mine own eyes had seen it, and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

Happy are thy men, happy are thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.

Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighteth in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel, to do judgment and justice.

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 18

A CAPTIVE MAID

CHARACTERS.

NAAMAN—Chief of the Syrian Army.
REBA—His Wife.
MIRIAM—A Captive Israelite Maid.
ELISHA—The Prophet.
GEHAZI—His Servant.
TWO SERVANTS TO NAAMAN.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—Naaman's home in Damascus; pleadings of a maiden.

SCENE II.—The same, a week later; yieldings of a captain.

SCENE III.—Elisha's home in Samaria; the prophet is interviewed.

SCENE IV.—In front of Elisha's home, next day; commands.

SCENE V.—The same, next day; rewards.

COSTUMES.

NAAMAN—Military costume made in tunic effect, trimmed with rich embroidery in purple and gold. Brown socks wrapped with black ribbon laces in criss-cross fashion. Sandals. Helmet made of old derby hat, painted white, with fan-shaped ornament made of paper, in front. Short, dark beard.

Reba—Flowing gown of light color. Scarf over head. Beads and jewels.

Miriam—A girl of fifteen or sixteen years. Dress of light color.

Elisha—Robe of white, with overdrapery of dark blue. Long, white hair and beard.

Gehazi—Tunic of tan-colored toweling, with scarf of brown around shoulders. Sandals. No beard.

Servants of Naaman—Costumes similar to Gehazi's.

Scene I.—Room in the House of Naaman.

(Richly furnished with Oriental draperies and rugs. Chairs and table are covered with Oriental cloth. Reba is lying upon couch at back center. Miriam enters.)

Miriam—Art thou resting in comfort now, my beloved mistress?

Reba—Yea, I am very comfortable, because of thy loving care, but I can not rest because of the sadness of mine heart.

Miriam (coming nearer)—It grieves me to see my dear mistress so sad. If only I could do something to make her happy.

Reba—No one can help my sorrow. Oh, Naaman, my husband! Why should this terrible affliction come upon thee? Thou art not only a great man, but a good man, and yet thou must die! (Weeps.)

Miriam—Die? The master die? Is there to be another war? Surely the enemy can not prevail against the mighty hosts of Syria.

Reba—Ah, no! In war he might have a chance for his life, but not now, not now! Dost thou remember the white spots which some time ago appeared upon

the master's hand? [Miriam nods.] They have spread to other parts of his body, and to-day he hath told me that it is leprosy—that hideous disease, that living death, which makes a man an exile, an object of loathing to all who see him, and even a burden to himself. Oh, Naaman, what doth thy glory and honor avail thee now? It would have been better if thou hadst fallen in battle. Oh, Naaman, my husband!

Miriam—Would God that my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy.

Reba—What sayest thou? There is no cure for leprosy.

Miriam—I know it is said so, but indeed there is a prophet who lives in my country and who hath cured many of this terrible disease. If only my lord were there, the prophet could heal him.

Reba (sitting up)—And what is the name of this prophet?

Miriam—He is called Elisha. Many are the wonderful deeds he hath performed, for he is a prophet of the Lord Jehovah, who giveth him marvelous power.

Reba (shaking head)—Nay, little maid; never was a leper cleansed. He who could heal a leper could bring the very dead to life.

Miriam—But the prophet that is in Samaria hath of a truth, by the power of the God of Israel, raised the dead to life.

Reba (angrily)—Dost thou mock me, maiden?

Miriam—Nay, my good mistress, I do not mock thee, for the prophet of Israel hath restored to life the son of a widow of Shunam. [On her knees:] Oh, I entreat thee, bid my lord Naaman to seek him.

Reba (rising and taking Miriam's hand)—Let us therefore go unto Naaman with this word of hope, and may thy God, through His servant Elisha, grant healing unto him. [CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—THE SAME, A WEEK LATER.

(Reba reclining as before.)

Miriam (entering)—Art thou refreshed from thy slumbers, my mistress?

Reba—Yea, little maid; my heart is made glad because of thee.

Miriam (kneeling beside her)—Dost thou have good news for me?

Reba—Yea, little maid, thou hast thy desire. Naaman, our mighty master, hath decided to seek the prophet in Israel for his healing.

Miriam (eagerly)—When?

Reba—As soon as he can obtain the king's permission and the king's credentials, ere he dare venture into another kingdom to ask a favor of a monarch with whose house Syria hath been many times at war.

Miriam—It seemeth foolish to have such a delay when my master is so ill and my mistress so sad.

Reba—Verily, the servants are diligently preparing the thank-offering for the prophet, should Naaman be healed. They are taking much gold and silver, besides many changes of raiment, in silk, cotton and linen of exquisite weave.

Miriam—Thinkest thou that the man of God will regard this?

Reba—It is customary, when asking a favor, to take in thine hand a gift, and I have never known a prophet

who would refuse it. Have we not tried many prophets and many gods? Besides, is not our master very rich? Yea, these things are but right.

Miriam—Whether it be right or unwise, I know not. My only prayer is that the mighty Naaman may find the great prophet and be healed of his leprosy.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—ROOM IN THE HOUSE OF ELISHA IN SAMARIA.

(The same setting as Scenes I. and II. may be used, with slight rearrangement of furniture. Elisha is seated.)

Gehazi (entering)—My master, a stranger is outside the gate and desires to talk with thee. He giveth his name as Obed, a soldier from Damascus. Shall I bid him enter?

Elisha—Knowest thou his voice, Gehazi?

Gehazi—Nay, my master, but it hath the ring of sincerity.

Elisha—Then he shall be admitted. Doubtless he cometh with this Syrian, Naaman, and seeketh me to inquire of the Lord for him. I will receive him here.

(Gehazi goes out, returning immediately with Obed, one of Naaman's servants, who bows low before Elisha. He then takes the face of the prophet between his hands and kisses his head. Elisha extends his hand, which Obed kisses, and gives his own hand to the prophet, who kisses it.)

Elisha—What is thy need, my son?

Obed—That thou wouldst heal my master, Naaman the Syrian.

Elisha—Neither king nor people have asked this thing at the hand of the Lord. Great love hast thou for thy master that thou alone comest to me.

Obed—Love and gratitude and admiration and pity, my lord. All these have I for my master Naaman. But I have come to thee more because of the pleadings of a little maid of Israel who was carried captive to Syria several years ago and is now a servant in the home of the mighty Naaman. It is because of her faith in Jehovah that we have come believing that thou wilt heal our master in His name.

Elisha—Verily, the faith of a child worketh much good in a heathen land. To-morrow at this hour thou shalt bring thy master here and both he and thou shalt know the only true God.

Obed—Thou art good unto thy servant, my lord. (Bows and leaves.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE IV.—IN FRONT OF ELISHA'S HOME, NEXT DAY.

(Naaman and two servants stand near the door, the servants being laden with gifts.)

Naaman (to Obed)—Hast thou a copy of the letter which the king of Syria wrote to the king of Israel?

Obed (taking letter from pocket in sleeve)—I have, my master.

Naaman—It is strange that this prophet does not come out to meet me. Perhaps he is so accustomed to visits from army captains that he does not respect the significance of our coming. [To other servant:] What bearest thou?

Servant (displaying money-bags)—I have here, my lord, the ten talents of silver and six thousand pieces of gold which thou didst bring as a gift to the prophet.

Naaman (to Obed)—And what hast thou?

Obed (displaying arms full of robes)—I have here, my lord, the ten changes of raiment which thou didst also bring as a gift to the prophet.

Naaman (to Obed)—Knock again, for I am weary of waiting. [He knocks and presently Gehazi opens the door.] Where is thy master?

Gehazi—He is within. What is thy errand?

Naaman—Tell thy master that Naaman, captain of the Syrian army, desires to see him. I have traveled from my own country that he might heal me of my leprosy. (Gehazi goes inside.)

Obed—Surely he will heal thee, my master, for he did bid me bring thee here to-day at this hour.

Gehazi (returning)—My master saith: "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall be restored again to thee and thou shalt be clean." (Disappears.)

Naaman (angrily)—What is the meaning of this? Why does he not come out himself and call on the name of his God, and heal my disease? But, instead, he maketh this strange request. Are not the rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean? Nay, I will not go to the muddy waters of the Jordan. (Stamps his foot and turns away.)

Obed—My lord, hear me. If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much easier, then, for thee that he saith: "Wash and be clean."

Naaman—Verily, there is truth in thy words. We will therefore go to the Jordan. I may as well obey his commands and see if aught comes of it, for I would be healed of this disease. [Waves arms.] On, on to the Jordan! (They start off.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE V.—THE SAME, NEXT DAY.

(Naaman and his servants stand at the door.)

Naaman (to Obed)—Knock, for I would give my thanks to the prophet who hath healed me. [Door opens presently and Elisha appears; Naaman bows.] O mighty Elisha, servant of the living God! Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel. Now, therefore, take a blessing of thy servant. (Servants come forward with gifts.)

Elisha (shaking his head)—As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none.

Naaman—Surely thou wilt not refuse, for how can I return to mine own land and not leave thee a token of my gratitude? Thou hast restored to me my life and thou hast shown to me that Jehovah regardeth not the amount of a man's wealth, but the value of his life. Anything I have is thine.

Elisha—Verily, I have my reward. Go on thy way, for as Jehovah has blessed thee by increasing thy days, so must thou bless others by using well this life which has been restored.

Naaman—Thou hast showed unto me the way of eternal life and I will obey thy commands. (Turns to go.)

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 19

A WOMAN WHO DARED

CHARACTERS.

AHASUERUS—King of Persia.
MORDECAI—A Captive Jew, Favored by the King.
ESTHER—The Queen.
HAMAN—The Prime Minister.
HATHACH—Esther's Servant.
COMPANY OF PERSIANS.
PAGE TO THE KING.
COURT MUSICIANS.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—The gate of the palace in Shushan; Mordecai ignores Haman.

SCENE II.—Throne-room of the palace; Haman plots with the king.

SCENE III.—Same as Scene I.; Mordecai appeals to Esther.

SCENE IV.—Same as Scene II.; Esther appeals to the king.

SCENE V.—Esther's banquet hall; rewards.

COSTUMES.

KING—A heavy man of middle age, with long, black beard and mustache. Wears royal purple robe embroidered with gold (yellow satin) or ermine (cotton). Crown of gold for throne-room scenes.

MORDECAI—A man of middle age, with dark beard and mustache. In Scene I. he wears a Persian costume, which is a long, flowing robe, with cape of Persian colors. Persian scarf for head-dress, bound in a turban effect. Sackcloth (burlap) robe in Scene III.

ESTHER—A dark-haired girl. Gown of soft, white cloth, with lace trimmings. Head-dress of white satine and beads. Bracelets of beads and necklace of gold.

HAMAN—Man of middle age, with dark beard. Rich robe of light blue, trimmed with yellow. Also yellow girdle and a turban cap of both colors.

HATHACH—A younger man, with short, dark beard. Robe of white muslin or toweling, reaching below the knees. Cape and turban of bright Persian colors.

PERSIANS—Robes of solid colors—blue, red, green, yellow—with scarfs and turbans of contrasting colors.

MUSICIANS—Three young men will be sufficient, one playing harp, another flute, another tambourine. Wear robes similar to the Persians, but of lighter hues—pink, yellow, green.

PAGE—A small boy with tunic made of muslin or toweling, and cape of purple and gold colors.

SCENE I.—AT THE GATE OF THE PALACE IN SHUSHAN.

(Wall is made from gray building-paper to represent stone. Gate in center is made from lattice material to represent bars. Through the gate can be seen the courtyard, with palms and a fountain, if possible. Mordecai sits on a bench outside the gate. Group of Persians stand at right. Haman enters left.)

Persians (bowing and then raising hands upward)—Hail! all hail! to the man whom the king delighteth to

honor. Long live Haman, favored prince of our great King Ahasuerus.

(Mordecai does not bow. Haman passes slowly through the gate and stands just inside, listening to following:)

A Persian (to Mordecai)—How is it that thou dost not bow before the great Haman, whom our king hath set over all his princes? Hast thou not heard of the command of the king that all men throughout the realm bow down before this man whom the king hath honored?

Mordecai—Verily, I have heard.

Persian—Why, then, dost thou transgress the king's command?

Mordecai—Verily, I worship the Lord God, Creator of heaven and earth, and before Him only do I bow.

Persian (sneeringly)—Aha! thou betrayest thyself, that thou art a Jew! And dost thou dare to exalt thyself before the man whom the king hath favored? Thou shalt receive thy just punishment in due time, thou audacious Jew! (Shakes fists at Mordecai, who goes off right.)

Haman (coming through the gate, speaks to Persians)—So, the cursed Jew hath gone! Every day as we come and go out through this gate he sitteth there and will not rise to bow before me. Verily, he saith that it is against his religion to bow before a man. He boweth only to the God of the Jews! Bah! Why doth he not worship the gods of the land in which he dwells? He must be put out of the way, for he annoyeth me. But he seemeth to have won the favor of the king, for Ahasuerus hath established him as keeper of the gate. Yet all of the Jews are despised by my countrymen.

We must rid ourselves of all the Jews, even Mordecai. I will go now, and present unto the king my request. (Returns through gate.)

[CURTAIN.]

(NOTE.—The wall for this scene should be placed across the center of the platform, which will make it possible to arrange most of the settings of the throne-room scene directly behind it.)

SCENE II.—THE THRONE-ROOM IN THE PALACE.

(A solid curtain of rich draperies will suffice for the background, if no interior setting is available. King is seated on throne, with scepter on his lap.)

Page (standing by door at right)—O my king, thy prime minister Haman desireth to see thee.

King—Bid him enter. [Haman enters and bows low on one knee some distance from throne; king extends scepter; Haman advances and stands near throne.] Thy king is delighted in thy presence, Haman, my minister. Dost thou bring good news of the affairs of our empire?

Haman—O my king, the affairs of thy great empire do prosper exceedingly, and thy fame is extended unto the ends of the earth. But it grieveth me much to tell thee that there is in thy kingdom a certain people, scattered abroad and dispersed in all the provinces; and their laws are diverse from those of all people, neither keep they the king's laws. Therefore, if it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed; and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver

into the hands of those that have charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries.

King—The silver is given unto thee, and the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee. [Removes signet ring and gives it to Haman.] I will call forth my scribes and direct them to prepare a decree that on the thirteenth day of the month Adar all Jews throughout my vast empire shall be killed and slain, both young and old, little children and women. And I will send postmen with this decree unto the governors and princes in every province. Come, now, and let us eat and drink [rises], that we may forget the worries of the kingdom. (They exit together.)

[CURTAIN.]

(NOTE.—If desired to shorten the play, Scene II. may be omitted.)

SCENE III.—AT THE GATE OF THE PALACE.

(Same as Scene I. Mordecai paces to and fro, wailing. He wears burlap.)

Mordecai—O God, my rock, why hast thou forsaken me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? As with a sword in my bones, mine adversaries reproach me, while they continually say unto me, "Where is thy God?"

Hathach (from courtyard inside the gate)—Behold, O Mordecai, whom the king hath favored as the keeper of his gate, our beloved queen hath bid me come unto thee to inquire why thy heart is cast down and whyfore do the Jews, her people, wail continually throughout all the provinces?

Mordecai—Woe, woe, woe unto us and unto our children! For our soul is bowed down to the dust. (Opens gate.)

Hathach—Cease, now, to wail in thy sorrow, for the queen hath beheld thine affliction and doth send thee these garments [shows beautiful robe] and doth bid me take thy sackcloth from thee.

Mordecai (shaking his head)—How can I adorn myself in fine raiment when my affliction is upon me and my people are nigh unto death?

Hathach—Wilt thou send unto Esther a message to tell her of thine affliction? For she doth inquire of thee.

Mordecai (nodding)—Wilt thou therefore say unto her: "Hast thou not heard, O my Esther, how that our enemy, Haman, hath secured a decree from the king that, on the thirteenth day of the month Adar, thine own people throughout all his empire shall be put to death, both young and old? It is for this cause that we mourn and lament." [Takes paper from sleeve.] Give unto her this copy of the decree, and charge her that she shall go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people.

Hathach (bowing)—I will deliver unto her thy message. (Exit.)

Mordecai (with soft music accompaniment)—Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed and my calamity laid in the balances together! For now it would be heavier than the sands of the sea; therefore my words are swallowed up. (Music continues for some time while he paces to and fro.)

Hathach (returning)—Hear again, O Mordecai, how that Esther hath read the decree and hath considered

thy message. Wherefore hath she bid me say unto thee: "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces do know that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king in the inner court, who is not called, there is one law to put him to death, except those to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter, that he may live. But I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days."

Mordecai (meditating)—So wilt thou say unto Esther: "Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou holdest thy peace at this time, then shall deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed. And who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Hathach—Again will I give thy message unto the queen. (Exit.)

Mordecai (with music)—My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.

But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in thee; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered. (Music continues until Hathach returns.)

Hathach (entering)—Hear again, O Mordecai, how that Esther the queen saith unto thee: "Go, gather together all the Jews that are in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day. I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and

then will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish."

Mordecai—I will do even as the queen hath commanded.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE IV.—THE THRONE-ROOM.

(As in Scene II. Ahasuerus is seated, with page standing near. Court musicians are playing on the harp, flute and timbrel. Presently the door opens and Esther timidly enters. The king's face lights with pleasure when he sees her.)

King (to musicians)—Cease now of thy music, because Esther the queen hath come into our presence.

(Esther bows upon one knee. King extends the scepter. She advances slowly and touches it.)

King—What wilt thou, Queen Esther, and what is thy request? It shall be given thee, even to the half of the kingdom.

Esther—If it seem good unto the king, let him come with Haman this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.

King—Verily, we will be with thee, as thou dost ask. [To page:] Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as the queen hath said. (Exit with Esther.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE V.—ESTHER'S BANQUET HALL.

(Use same background as last scene. Low table covered with white cloth in center of stage. On it are a great basket of fruit, candles, goblets and dishes of gold, the latter made of gilded paper plates. Around

the table are three couches, upon which Esther, Haman and the king are reclining. Palms and divans placed in corners and at sides of the room. Hathach stands at rear.)

Esther—Tarry yet a little while, O king, for, now that the banquet is over, I would talk with thee.

King—Gladly will I tarry, for thou art fair and gracious, O queen. Tell me thy request, and it shall be granted thee, even to the half of the kingdom, for verily this is the second banquet to which thou hast invited us.

Esther—Thou art indeed kind, O king. But if I have found favor in thy sight, and if it please the king, let my life be given at my petition, and my people at my request. For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain and to perish.

King (angrily)—What meanest thou? Who hath done this thing? (Stands.)

Esther—The enemy thou seest before thee. He is Haman.

Haman (on knees before Esther)—O Queen Esther, spare me!

King (to Hathach)—Take this wretch from before my sight and cast him outside the palace. [Hathach takes Haman by the collar and thrusts him out. King turns to Esther:] Thou art good as well as beautiful, O queen, for thou didst think of thy people and not only of thyself.

Esther—If it please the king, let an order go forth to reverse the letters sent out by Haman, in which he wrote that all Jews in the king's provinces should be destroyed. Even Mordecai and I shall both perish, for he is my uncle.

King (surprised)—What is this that thou sayest? That Mordecai is thy uncle? Surely, this thing hath not been revealed to me before. But now he shall write whatsoever thou dost command and shall seal it with the king's ring, for he shall have Haman's place and be next to me in the kingdom. And not one of thy people shall perish.

Hathach (returning)—O my king, behold the gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai, that it standeth even now in the courtyard of Haman. (They all look through window.)

King—Hang Haman himself thereon. (Exit Hathach.)

Esther—Great is the king and good unto all who serve him faithfully. But greater is Jehovah, who careth for His children and showeth them a way of escape from the enemy.

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 20

AN INTERPRETER OF DREAMS

CHARACTERS.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR—King of Babylon.
ARIOCH—Captain of the Guard.
ASHPENAZ—Master of the Eunuchs.
DANIEL, SHADRACH, MESHACH, ABEDNEGO } Jewish Lords over Babylon.
MAGICIANS, ASTROLOGERS, SORCERERS.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

ACT I.—DANIEL DARES.

SCENE I.—Servants' quarters in the palace; a noble resolve.

SCENE II.—Room in the palace, ten days later; passing the test.

ACT II.—DANIEL WINS.

SCENE I.—Room in the palace, a year later; wise men summoned.

SCENE II.—The same, next day; the king's dream.

COSTUMES.

KING—Man of middle age, with heavy, dark hair and beard. Robe of purple, richly embroidered with

gold cords and lace. Head-dress of purple satine, trimmed with bands of yellow. Bracelets and anklets of beads.

Arioch—Tunic of tan toweling, made knee length and without sleeves. Brown socks, with sandals laced high with black laces in criss-cross fashion. Helmet with fan-shaped ornament in front. Cape of bright material, reaching to knees. Short, dark beard.

Ashpenaz—Tunic of white, made knee length and without sleeves. Bare legs and sandals. No head-dress. Short, dark beard.

Jewish Lords—Flowing robes of white, tan or gray, with mantles of bright colors.

Wise Men—About two of each. Flowing robes and white beards. Turbans of various colors.

ACT I.

Scene I.—Servants' Quarters in the Palace.

(The room is rather small, with plastered walls and furnished with chairs and table of peculiar design. Heavy draperies at doors and windows. The four Jewish lords are talking together at rise of curtain. Two of them may be standing by the window and other two seated at opposite side of room.)

Daniel—Verily, my brethren, we have fared exceedingly well since we were brought hither captive from Jerusalem.

Shadrach—The king hath indeed favored us by entrusting us with duties pertaining to the city.

Meshach—And we are lodged and fed within the very walls of the palace.

Abednego—The food of our table surpasseth even the bounties of our homeland.

Daniel—Methinks there be danger in the richness of the food and the wine which are brought before us. Such luxuries will only ruin our bodies and bring us to naught. (Others nod.)

Ashpenaz (entering with tray of food and wine)—Yo, ho! my lords, whom the king delighteth to honor. Bring up your chairs for the repast which the king hath ordered for thee. (Puts food on table.)

Daniel (looking at the food)—Wherefore doth the king send unto us this food of such richness and daintiness? Doth he purpose to fatten us like fowls and pigeons and sell us in the market-place?

Ashpenaz—Nay, my lord Daniel, it is because of the respect which the king hath for thee and thy brethren. It is because of thy wisdom, knowledge and understanding in matters of science that he doth desire to feed thee and bring thee into favor with others of his court and household. Verily, he hath appointed thee a daily provision of his meat and of his wine, so that some day ye may stand before him in beauty and strength. Come, for the table is spread before thee.

Daniel (shaking his head)—Nay, I will not partake of his meat, nor of his wine, to thus defile myself.

Ashpenaz (surprised)—Verily, thou art foolish to refuse this food of such savoriness. And why should ye refuse to nourish thyself for the beauty of thy face and body in the presence of the king? Surely, if thou dost refuse this food, thou wilt make me endanger my head to the king.

Daniel—I beseech thee that thou wilt prove thy servants ten days. Give us plainer food and only water

to drink. Then compare us in countenance and body with those who eat of the king's meat and drink of his wine, and deal with us accordingly.

Ashpenaz (gathering up dishes on tray)—Surely, my lord Daniel, it is a most unusual request, but I shall abide by thy desire.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—A ROOM IN THE PALACE, TEN DAYS LATER.

(Arrange as elaborately as possible, with rugs, draperies and furniture of Oriental design. Palms and vases of flowers also may be used. King seated upon a throne. The four Jewish lords, with Ashpenaz, stand before him.)

Ashpenaz—O mighty king, thou dost see before thee the four captive lords of Judah which thou hast set in authority over the people of Babylon. It was even they who refused to eat of the food and drink of the wine which thou didst give them from thine own table.

Daniel (bowing)—O king, live forever!

King—Wherefore hast thou made this request of me, my lords of Judah?

Daniel—Because we could not defile ourselves with the richness of thy food and of thy wine. Such luxuries would only ruin our bodies and bring us to naught. Look now upon us, after these ten days of fulfilling our request, and see if there be any fault in us.

King—Verily, thy faces are fairer and thy bodies are better than all of the people which did eat of the portion of my meat prepared for them. Greater power, therefore, shall be given unto thee.

[CURTAIN.]

ACT II.

Scene I.—Same as Last Scene, a Year Later.

(The king is seated. Wise men stand before him, with Arioch at one side.)

A Magician (bowing)—O king, live forever. Wherefore dost thou call us before thee?

King—Because I have had a dream and my spirit is troubled to know the meaning thereof.

An Astrologer—Tell thy servants the dream and we will show the interpretation.

King—Verily, the thing has been forgotten. And if ye will not make it known unto me, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces and your houses destroyed.

A Sorcerer—Let the king tell his servants the dream and we will show the interpretation of it.

King (angrily)—I tell thee that the dream has gone from me, and, if ye will not make it known to me, there is but one decree for you. But if ye show the dream and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive rewards and great honor.

Magician—There is not a man upon the earth that can tell the king's dream.

Astrologer—Neither has any king, lord or ruler ever asked such a thing of any magician or astrologer.

Sorcerer—It is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none that can reveal it unto thee, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.

King (jumping up angrily)—Vipers! Dost thou defy me in my request? Why are ye called magicians, astrologers and sorcerers? Because ye have prepared only lying and corrupt words to speak before me.

Verily, thou shalt be destroyed! [To Arioch:] Take them away from me and throw them to the lions.

(Wise men are led out, wailing and pleading.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—THE SAME, NEXT DAY.

(The king is seated. Arioch enters with Daniel.)

Arioch—O king, live forever! I have found a man of the captives of Judah who will reveal thy dream unto thee and give the interpretation thereof. When the guards went forth to slay all the wise men of Babylon, at thy request, this man Daniel said: "Why is the decree so hasty from the king? Will he not hear me?" So, after giving him time to discern the secret, I have brought him unto thee.

King (delighted)—Art thou indeed able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?

Daniel—Verily, the secret which the king hath demanded can not be shown unto thee by the magicians, astrologers and sorcerers. But there is a God in heaven who revealeth secrets and maketh known to thee what shall be in the latter days.

King—Speak quickly, for I am troubled in mind and body.

Daniel—Verily, O king, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mayest know the thoughts of thy heart.

King—Then tell me the dream and the interpretation.

Daniel—O king, thou didst see a great image, whose brightness was excellent and the form thereof was terrible. Its head was of fine gold, its breast and arms of silver, its thighs of brass, its legs of iron, and its feet part of iron and part of clay.

Thou didst also see a stone, cut without hands, which smote the image and brake it to pieces, so that it became like the chaff of the threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away; and the stone became a great mountain and filled the earth.

That is the dream, and now we will tell the interpretation thereof.

Thou, O king, art a king of kings, for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, and power and strength and glory.

Even the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air hath He given into thy hand, and hath made thee ruler over all. Thou art this head of gold.

And after thee shall rise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall rule over all the earth.

And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, forasmuch as iron subdueth all things.

And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of iron and part of clay, the kingdom shall be divided.

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed. It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, but it shall stand forever, as the stone which became a mountain.

So God hath made known to thee what shall come to pass hereafter. And the dream is certain and the interpretation sure.

King—O lord Daniel, of a truth it is, and your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets. Therefore, because thou hast shown me these things, I will offer an oblation unto thee, as soon as it can be prepared. Gifts of gold and of silver and of costly raiment shall be brought unto thee. And I will make thee ruler over the whole province of Babylon. And thou shalt be chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel—O king, thou art good indeed to thy servant. But I pray thee that thou wilt not forget my brethren, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, for they are also worthy of great honor, being servants of the living God.

King—Verily, they shall be given places of honor with thee in the affairs of the kingdom, and thou shalt dwell forever in the palace with the king.

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 21

THE FIERY FURNACE

CHARACTERS.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR—King of Babylon.
SHADRACH, MESHACH, ABEDNEGO } Jewish Lords over Babylon.
DIMON, ZETHAR } Lords of Babylon.
A HERALD.
TWO SOLDIERS.
MAIDEN DANCERS.
COMPANY OF JEWS.
COMPANY OF BABYLONIANS.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—Throne-room in the palace in Babylon; the king's law is defied.

SCENE II.—Before the fiery furnace; tried by fire.

COSTUMES.

KING—Man of middle age, with heavy, dark hair and beard. Robe of purple, richly embroidered with gold cords and lace. Head-dress of purple satine trimmed with bands of yellow. Bracelets and anklets of beads.

Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego—Young men. Flowing robes of dark material, with turbans to match. Short, dark beards.

Dimon and Zethar—Costumes similar to the three above.

Herald—White tunic of knee length, without sleeves. A boy may take this part.

Soldiers—Tunics of brown toweling. Brown socks, with sandals laced high in criss-cross fashion. Shields, spears and helmet.

Jews—Robes of white and black stripes; beards.

Babylonians—Flowing robes of dark colors, with turbans of contrasting colors. Short beards.

(Women may dress as men for Jewish and Babylonian characters.)

Scene I.—Throne-room in the Palace in Babylon.

(Arrange as elaborately as possible, with rugs and draperies. King is seated, with soldier-guard on each side, standing. At rise of curtain, Dimon and Zethar stand before king.)

Dimon and Zethar (bowing)—O king, live forever!

Zethar—Thou, O king, hast made a decree that every man who shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, psaltery and all kinds of music shall fall down and worship the golden image which thou hast builded, and whosoever doth not obey shall be cast into a burning fiery furnace.

King—The law has been made and sealed with the royal signet.

Dimon—But there are certain Jews, O king, who have not regarded thy commands. They serve not thy

gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

King (angrily)—And who is it that thus defieth my commands?

Dimon—O king, it is those captive Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are the men who have not regarded thee.

King (rising in a rage)—The dogs shall be punished. Ho! soldiers of the guard, go thou and bring these men into my presence. (Soldiers go.)

(Lower curtain a moment to denote lapse of time.)

King—Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that ye serve not my gods nor worship the golden image which I have set up?

Abednego—We bow before no god but Jehovah, O king.

King—And wilt thou once more hear the command of the king? If, even now, when ye hear the sound of music, ye shall fall down and worship the golden image, well. But if ye worship not, ye shall be cast that same hour into the fiery furnace. And who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

Shadrach—O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer thee in this matter.

Meshach—If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thy hand, O king.

Abednego—But, if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

King (furiously)—Therefore do I command these guards to bind thee and thrust thee into the fiery fur-

nace, which shall be heated seven times its usual heat. And may the gods have mercy upon us! (Sinks.)

(Soldiers grab prisoners.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—BEFORE THE FIERY FURNACE.

(At back of stage, bushel-baskets covered with brown cloth to represent huge stones are arranged in circular "pit" form, with a couple of steps arranged at one side, by which the prisoners are led to the brink of the pit. Red tableau powder burns within the pit. Palms and other greenery may be arranged at sides and back of furnace. At rise of curtain, several maidens dressed in white enter for the sacrificial dance, with accompaniment of "Cry of the Prophets of Baal," from Mendelssohn's "Elijah." They are followed by the three prisoners in chains, with guards. After them come the king with his attendants, followed by the Jews and Babylonians.)

Herald (stepping forth with trumpet, blows a summons)—To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations and languages, that at the time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar, the king, hath set up. And whoever falleth not down to worship it shall that same hour be cast into the burning fiery furnace.

Babylonians—Aha! Aha! The burning fiery furnace!

Soldier (to the prisoners)—Jewish captives of the king of Babylon, hear ye this command?

Shadrach—We bow before no God but Jehovah.

King—If ye therefore again refuse to obey the command of your king, no mercy remaineth for you.

A Jew (pleading with prisoners)—O my brethren, protect your people! Will ye not bow with us?

Meshach (raising arms to heaven)—O God of Israel, strengthen Thy people! Make them strong to serve Thee!

Second Jew (on his knees before the prisoners)—O brethren, will ye not obey the command of the king and save yourselves and your people?

Shadrach—Hast thou forgotten the command of Jehovah: "Thou shalt have no other gods but me"?

First Jew—But do you not fear the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar?

Abednego—We fear the wrath of the king, but we fear God more.

King—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, lords whom I have set over Babylon, will ye not obey my commands, that your lives may be saved and your people spared?

Jews (pleading)—Save us, O princes of the house of Israel!

Shadrach—Brethren of Israel, only those shall be free men who for their faith are ready to suffer even fire.

Babylonian—Make them bend the knee or burn them!

Another—Thou hast made thy command, O king!

Another—Throw them into the fiery furnace!

Meshach—I serve Jehovah and fear not what man can do to me.

Abednego—I remember the promise: "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee."

Shadrach—Yea, because we have made the Lord our refuge, there shall no evil befall us.

All Three Together—We shall trust in the Lord forever!

King—Cast them into the fiery furnace!

(The soldiers lead the prisoners to the brink of the pit and thrust them forward, but themselves are thrust backward by the heat thereof. The king, Jews, Babylonians, all turn away their faces with groans and lamentations. Dancers repeat their ceremony briefly. The spectators gradually turn to look upon the scene. Angel appears with the three men in the fire.)

King (observing the angel)—What meaneth this thing? [Rubs eyes.] Do my eyes deceive me? Did we not cast *three* men *bound* into the midst of the fire?

A Babylonian—Verily, there were three, O king, and their chains were heavy and strong.

King—Lo, I see *four* men *loose,* walking in the midst of the fire, and no harm has come to them! And the form of one of them is like a son of some god.

Jews (joyfully)—Jehovah, He is the God! It is He that hath saved them!

King (advancing to furnace, the heat having abated)—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth and come hither. (They come forth slowly, while the others fall back amazed.)

Herald—Behold, their chains are loosed!

First Soldier—The fire hath had no power on their bodies!

Second Soldier—Neither is their hair singed!

First Soldier—Moreover, their coats are not changed, and there is no smell of fire upon them. (Smells garments.)

Second Soldier—Do the Babylonians have a god who could do this thing?

King—Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who hath sent His angel and delivered His servants that trusted in Him and have changed the king's word and yielded their bodies, that they might not worship any except their own God.

Therefore, I make a decree, that every people, nation and language which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego shall be cut to pieces, because there is no other God who can deliver after this manner.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—For in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 22

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

CHARACTERS.

Belshazzar—King of Babylon.
Ramah—The Queen.
Daniel—A Jewish Captive, Governor.
Wives of Belshazzar.
Princes and Royal Officers.
Banquet Guests.
Magicians, Astrologers, Sorcerers.
Musicians and Dancers.
Arioch—Captain of the Guards.

COSTUMES.

Belshazzar—A man of middle age, with heavy, dark hair and beard. Robe of purple, richly embroidered with gold cords and lace. Bracelets and anklets of beads. Head-dress of purple sateen, with bands of yellow.

Arioch—Tunic of white, or tan toweling, made knee length and without sleeves. Mantle of dark material. Bare legs and sandals. Short, dark beard.

Daniel—Age about forty-five. Dark beard. Flowing robe of white, with mantle of dark color.

Queen and Wives of Belshazzar—Flowing robes of light colors, ornamented with lace and beads.

Princes and Royal Officers—Costumes similar to that of Arioch, with brighter colors for mantles.

Banquet Guests—Have as many as stage will permit. They wear flowing robes of various colors.

Wise Men—About two of each. Flowing robes and white beards. Turbans of various colors.

Musicians—Tunics of various colors, made knee length, and without sleeves. Turbans of bright colors.

Dancers—Several maidens in soft, flowing robes, with bands of ribbon around the head.

Scene—A Banquet-room.

(Arranged as elaborately as possible. Table in center, placed lengthwise toward the audience. King and queen seated at far end, facing the audience. Other guests on sides of table. Smaller tables at each side of the center table, each filled with guests. All tables set with dishes of glass and gold, the latter being gilded paper plates. Pyramids of fruit and vases of flowers on all tables. Glasses of imitation wine at each place. Palms in corners of room. Doors at back, and also right and left, hung with draperies. Musicians seated at front right and left. At rise of curtain the dancers enter and perform between the tables, then exit. Banquet guests show much emotion by swaying and cheering. Suddenly the writing appears upon the wall at one side of room, being projected with a lantern. Revelry stops suddenly and all stare at the writing.)

Guests (individuals cry)—Look! See! Behold! Gods, protect us! O king, preserve us!

King (rising)—What is this that cometh to pass?

Arioch—O king, live forever! The like hath never been seen before.

King—Verily, my thoughts are troubled and my body trembles with fear.

(People continue their cries and exclamations.)

Arioch—Lo, the writing is in an unknown tongue. There be none here to read it for us.

King—Therefore, go quickly, my captain [Arioch rises], and summon the magicians, astrologers, sorcerers and other wise men, that perchance they may reveal it unto us. (Arioch leaves.)

(Drop curtain a few minutes to denote lapse of time.)

Arioch (entering with wise men)—O king, live forever! I have hastily summoned a few of the wise men of the city, and others are coming.

King—Verily, whosoever shall read this writing and show me the interpretation thereof shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. (Wise men confer together in pantomime and shake heads.)

Magician—O king, this thing is beyond the power of thy magicians.

Astrologer—No astrologer has ever heard of such.

Sorcerer—Verily, there is no interpretation given unto us.

King (wringing his hands)—Ye wise men of Babylon, can ye not help me? Unto whom, then, shall we go? (All shake their heads.)

Queen—O king, let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed. There is a man in thy kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. For in the days of thy father Nebuchadnezzar there was

found in him wisdom and understanding like unto the gods. As an interpreter of dreams and a dissolver of doubts he has no equal. Therefore, let Daniel be called and he will show the interpretation.

King—O queen, thou art both beautiful and wise. As thou hast spoken, so shall it be done. Go, Arioch, and fetch this Daniel. You will find him in the servants' quarters near by.

(Arioch goes, and guests continue their exclamations and swayings, to accompaniment of soft music.)

Arioch (entering with Daniel)—O king, live forever! The captive prince of Judah is before thee. (Bows.)

King (rising)—O mighty Daniel, whom the king, my father, brought out of Jewry, I have heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in thee. Now, the wise men of Babylon have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing and make known unto me the interpretation thereof. But they could not show the meaning of the thing. But I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations and dissolve doubts; so, if thou canst read the writing and make it known unto me, thou shalt be clothed in scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Daniel—Let thy gifts be to thyself and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto thee and make known the interpretation. [The guests lean forward expectantly.]

O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar, thy father, the kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honor.

And for the majesty that He gave him, all people, nations and languages trembled and feared before him.

But when his heart was lifted up and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne and they took his glory from him.

And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses; they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that He appointeth over it whomsoever He will.

And thou, his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this.

But thou hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His temple before thee, and thou and thy lords and thy wives have drunk wine from them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold and brass and iron and wood and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know. And the God in whose hand thy breath is, hast thou not glorified.

And these are the words that His hand has written: *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.*

This is the interpretation of the thing: *Mene*—God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. *Tekel*—Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting. *Peres*—Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.

People (standing and drinking toast with wine)—Long live Daniel, for a mighty man is he! (Sit again.)

King (rising)—Now shall the king keep his promise unto thee. Take him forth, Arioch, my captain, and bid the servants clothe him in scarlet and put a chain of gold about his neck, and from henceforth he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

(People stand and shout, with wine-glasses to lips.)

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 23

A PERSECUTED PROPHET

CHARACTERS.

Darius—King of Babylon.
Arioch—Captain of the Guards.
Daniel—A Jewish Captive, Governor of Babylon.
Page to the King.
Two Soldiers.
Company of Jews.
Chief, Mibzar, Ajah, Igal, Kenaz } Satraps of Babylon.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

Act I.—The Plot against Daniel.

Scene I.—The palace garden in Babylon; jealousy.
Scene II.—The same, several days later; the king's edict.
Scene III.—The same, next day; Daniel is warned.
Tableau—Daniel at prayer.

Act II.—Accused and Delivered.

Scene I.—Room in the palace; the edict enforced.
Scene II.—Near the den of lions, next morning; delivered.

COSTUMES.

DARIUS—Man of middle age, with heavy, dark hair and beard. Robe of purple, richly embroidered with gold cords and lace. Bracelets and anklets of beads and colored ivory. Head-dress of purple satin, with bands of yellow.

ARIOCH—Tunic of white, knee length and without sleeves. Mantle of dark material. Bare legs and sandals. Short, dark beard.

DANIEL—Age about thirty-five. Short, dark beard. Flowing robe of white, with mantle of dark color.

SATRAPS—Costumes similar to Daniel's.

JEWS—Robes of white and black (wide) stripes. Beards.

SOLDIERS—Dressed similar to Arioch. Shields and spears.

All characters wear sandals, which can be made from slipper soles tied to the feet with strips of cloth.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A GARDEN NEAR THE KING'S PALACE IN BABYLON.

(May be simply arranged with palms, ferns, flowers and possibly a fountain. Several rustic or white benches at back and sides. At rise of curtain the satraps are grouped at right, watching the king and Arioch, who stroll across the garden, talking in pantomime, and pass off left.)

Mibzar—Arioch hath won favor of the king.

Kenaz—Aye, the king favors any upstart. He maketh Arioch, a man of no birth, captain of his guard, and he maketh a Jew the governor of Babylon.

Mibzar—Thou meanest Lord Daniel? But he is a prince in his own land, and mighty in wisdom.

Kenaz—Aye, the king leans heavily upon his counsel. It is "My Lord Daniel, this," and "My Lord Daniel, that," until I am wearied of my Lord Daniel.

Ajah—How long shall this upstart Jew rule in Babylon?

Igal—The king is bewitched by him.

Mibzar—It is known that this Daniel serves a false God. He worships neither Bel-Merodach, Nebo, nor our Lady Ishtar. I have often seen him kneeling before his open window with his face turned toward Jerusalem.

Ajah—He will not enter our temples nor eat of the meat of our sacrifices, lest it defile him. (All laugh.)

Chief—Let us all go before the king and accuse him.

Kenaz—Accuse him of what?

Mibzar—We shall not be able to find any fault against this Daniel except we find it concerning the law of his God.

Igal (slapping him on the back)—Thou hast spoken wisely.

Chief—Aha! It is a golden thought. If Daniel will not worship our gods, and prayeth openly to his own God, dost thou think he would cease if the king forbade him to pray?

Ajah—He would not cease if forty kings forbade him.

Mibzar—But will the king forbid?

Chief—Leave it to me and I will devise a plan whereby we shall secure the king's aid. Let us be going. (They exit.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—SAME AS BEFORE, SEVERAL DAYS LATER.

(The king is seated in the garden. A page sits near by. Satraps enter and bow.)

King—What has brought thee hither?

Chief—O king, we have discovered a plot.

King (rising quickly)—A plot? Where are the traitors?

Chief—That is what we can not discover. But we know that they have sworn an oath never to bow the knee to thee, nor to the gods of Babylon.

King (sternly)—Do not rest until ye find these men and bring them unto me.

Chief—O king, we have counseled together and have planned a way to find them. If thou wilt, make an interdict that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.

Mibzar—Thus, O king, perhaps we shall discover these men who will not acknowledge thee and thy gods.

King—It soundeth well and it shall be done. [To page:] Wilt thou fetch me some parchment and writing-ink?

(Page brings roll of light-brown paper and curiously shaped bottle of ink, with quill pen; also sealing-wax. The king writes hurriedly, glances over the edict, and stamps it with his ring dipped in the wax.)

King—I stamp this edict with the great seal of the Medes and Persians, which no man can annul. (Daniel enters. The Chief takes edict triumphantly.)

Chief—O my king, should not the governor of Babylon be informed of what thou hast done?

King—Surely, and thou shalt read it now.

Chief (reading)—Hearken, ye men of Babylon, Chaldea and Persia: Be it known to you this day that whosoever shall ask or petition of any god or man for thirty days, save only of the king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. [Turning to Daniel:] And it is sealed with the seal of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not and which no man may annul.

(Satraps regard Daniel triumphantly, but he turns to the king.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—SAME AS BEFORE, NEXT DAY.

(Daniel seated in the garden. Arioch enters hurriedly and cautiously.)

Arioch—O my lord Daniel, the satraps plot against thee to do thee mischief.

Daniel—They can do nothing except it be God's will.

Arioch—O my lord Daniel, they can cast thee to the lions if they find thee praying to thy God. [Wrings his hands.] I beg thee not to pray for thirty days.

Daniel—Not pray?

Arioch—At least, pray not so men may see thee, O my lord; dost thou not care for thy life?

Daniel—And dost thou think that, if I closed my window, where I am accustomed to pray, and barred my door and prayed in secret, that my God, to whom I prayed thus fearfully, would hear me?

Arioch—Would he not, my lord?

Daniel—Aye; but I must be for a sign in Babylon that my God is the only living God. Though my body is captive, my spirit is free, and whom shall I fear but God?

Arioch—Dost thou not fear the lions?

Daniel—The lions? Yea, I fear the lions, but I fear God more.

Arioch—Then thou must defy the satraps! Pray with all thy faith, and may thy God be with thee!

[CURTAIN.]

TABLEAU.

A street scene, with house at back. An upper window is thrown open and Daniel appears. He kneels and stretches his arms forward, with face uplifted, as if in prayer. Satraps assemble at one side, below, and watch him. Soft music: "My Faith Looks Up to Thee."

[CURTAIN.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—ROOM IN THE PALACE.

(This may be presented in the garden or in the throne-room of the palace. The king is seated and talking with Arioch, who stands near. Satraps enter.)

Satraps (bowing low)—O king, live forever!

King—What brings ye here?

Chief—O my lord, our hearts are heavy, for a great disaster hath befallen thy kingdom. The lord Daniel—

King (leaning forward, eagerly)—Speak on quickly! My lord Daniel—is he ill?

Chief—N-n-n-no, not ill, but—oh, how can I explain? (Wrings hands in assumed anguish.)

King (furiously)—Am I surrounded by mad men?

Chief (recovering himself)—Nay, nay, my king! But I tremble to tell thee that thy lord Daniel is the rebel who defies the laws of thy kingdom.

King (angrily)—Thou art all liars! It can not be true!

Chief—O king, hast thou not signed a decree that every man who shall ask a petition of any god or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?

King—The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

Chief—This Daniel, who is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth thee not, O king, nor the decree which thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.

King (clenching fists)—Aha! ye brood of vipers! Was it for this that ye sought me to make the decree? Was it to plot against Daniel that ye bargained with me?

Chief (as all satraps bow low)—O king, live forever! Thou dost know that we are loyal to thee.

King—Bah! I declare that Daniel, prince of Judah, governor of this city, to be of more value than all of you! And why should I sacrifice Daniel unto *you?*

Chief—Not unto us, O king, but to the law!

King—I am above the law.

Chief—Daniel hath defied thee and the law of Babylon. Let him be cast to the lions! We demand that it be done! (Satraps shout and nod approvingly.)

Arioch (springing forward)—Oh, no, my king! Daniel hath done no wrong. He is kind and courageous. Do not cast him to the lions, I beseech thee! (Falls upon his knees, pleadingly.)

Chief (scornfully)—Ah, fellow! Thou art a rebel too? He who pleads for Daniel is a rebel and a traitor to the laws of Babylon.

Satraps (waving arms)—Aye, rebel!

Arioch (standing)—Rebel I may be, but I plead before the king that he set aside the law which he hath signed and sealed, for it is an evil law.

Satraps (waving arms)—Rebel! Traitor! Away with him!

King (rising)—Cease your wrangling, I beseech thee.

Chief (magnificently)—Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is: No decree which the king establisheth may be changed.

King (sinking upon throne)—Go, and summon Daniel. (Page goes.)

Arioch (pleading)—And wilt thou cast him to the lions?

King (sadly)—O my captain, but one thing is greater than the king in Babylon—it is his word which he hath sworn.

Chief—Verily, thou canst not revoke the law.

(The king and Arioch talk in pantomime, and satraps also in another group, while orchestra or piano renders "Faith of Our Fathers" softly.)

Arioch (as Daniel appears)—Behold, he cometh.

King (advancing a few steps to meet him)—O Daniel, prince of Judah and governor of Babylon, thou dost know of thy transgression?

Daniel (bowing)—O my king, I have heard the decree which thou hast made.

King—And dost thou deny that thou hast prayed to thy God?

Daniel—Deny it? No!

King (to Arioch, sadly)—Take him and cast him to the lions. O Daniel, thy God whom thou dost serve continually, He will deliver thee. (Sinks upon throne and covers face with hands.)

Daniel (turning, as he leaves)—Yea, O king, He will deliver.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—NEAR THE DEN OF LIONS, EARLY MORNING OF THE NEXT DAY.

(The den is of cave type, leading supposedly downward. A great stone covers the entrance. Palms and other greenery may be placed on each side. Electric fan off stage gives suggestion of a breeze. A company of Jews wailing near by. King enters with Arioch. No sound comes from the den.)

Arioch—Hark to the wailing of the Jews! They have mourned throughout the night. And now the sun is rising on another day.

King (pacing)—To me also the night hours have been like unto the ages, and filled with wailings within my soul. Sleep has been far from me.

Arioch—No sound cometh from yonder den. All is quiet as the grave. (Soldiers and satraps enter.)

King (approaching den and calling)—O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou dost serve continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

Daniel (from within)—O king, live forever. My God hath sent His angel and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me, forasmuch as before Him innocency was found in me, and also before thee, O king, have I done no harm.

King (to soldiers)—Break the seal and release him. Bid him come forth unto me! [They remove stone and assist Daniel to come out. The king rushes toward him, falling upon his neck.] O Daniel, verily, *thy* God is God. [Sees satraps.] Ho, satraps! be glad and rejoice! The God of Daniel hath shut the lions' mouths.

Chief (angrily)—No God hath power to do such a thing. We are betrayed! Thou hast not dealt fairly by us, O King Darius!

King (snarling)—As I live, and have dealt fairly by Daniel, according to the law, so will I deal with you.

Chief (pleading on his knees)—Not death by the jaws of the lions, O king! (All satraps fall upon their knees.)

King—I have made the decree at thy command and sealed it with the great seal of the Medes and Persians.

Arioch (sarcastically)—Which no man can annul.

(Satraps try to escape, but soldiers hold them.)

King—Cast them to the lions! [The order is obeyed, amidst shrieks and wails.]

Lo, I make a decree that in all the dominions of my kingdom, men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, and stedfast forever, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and He worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 24

A FISH STORY

CHARACTERS.

JONAH—A Prophet.
CAPTAIN OF A SHIP.
SAILORS.
KING OF NINEVEH.
ROYAL GUARDS.
ANGEL OF THE LORD.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—Jonah's quarters in Zebulun; the rebellious prophet.

SCENE II.—In a ship bound for Tarshish; an unfortunate prophet.

SCENE III.—The king's palace in Nineveh; a pleading prophet.

SCENE IV.—Near the wall of Nineveh; a repentant prophet.

COSTUMES.

JONAH—A man of middle age, with flowing robe of white and mantle (overdrapery) of dark red or blue. Dark beard and hair.

CAPTAIN AND SAILORS—Tunics of white or tan-colored toweling, reaching below knees and without sleeves. Bare legs and sandals. Dark hair and beards. White turbans.

KING—Flowing robe of brilliant colors, trimmed with gold shoulder-straps. Crown of gold. Long, black hair and beard.

GUARDS—Tunics of tan toweling, with capes of bright purple cambric. Peculiarly shaped helmets. Spears.

ANGEL—Flowing robe of white, with wings and long, white hair and beard.

SCENE I.—JONAH'S QUARTERS IN ZEBULUN.

(Small room, the doors and windows covered with heavy draperies. Low couch at one side; also table and chairs of Oriental design. Jonah reclining on couch, facing audience. Angel appears in opposite doorway.)

Angel (calling)—Jonah!

Jonah (rising)—Here am I; who calleth me?

Angel—I am the angel of the Lord, and I am mindful of thy faithful witnessing of me. Therefore, I would send thee unto Nineveh, that great city, to cry against it, for their wickedness is come up before me.

Jonah—O my Lord God, count not Thy servant able for such a task. Verily, the work is beyond me, and I would have another go in my stead.

Angel—Dost thou refuse to obey the call of the Lord? If thou wilt obey my commands, all of thy work shall prosper and I will keep thee from all evil.

Jonah (passionately)—Nay, I am not able. The task is too great. Get thee from me and leave me in peace. (Throws himself upon the couch, hiding his face. Angel disappears.)

[CURTAIN.]

Scene II.—In a Ship Bound for Tarshish.

(Room arranged similarly to Scene I., with furniture in different position. A lamp is arranged upon the table by placing a piece of candle in a brass bowl. Jonah asleep on couch. Captain and sailors enter.)

Captain—What meanest thou, O sleeper? [Jonah sits up.] Arise and call upon thy God, if so be that He will hear thee, that we perish not. For the storm rages and the ship is nigh unto destruction. We have called upon our gods and they have no ears. Also, we have cast forth much of the cargo into the sea, to lighten the ship.

A Sailor—Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is come upon us. [They do so.] Verily, the curse is because of the man yonder. (Points to Jonah.)

Captain—What is thy name and thy occupation?

Jonah—My name is Jonah, a prophet and minister of the Lord, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land.

Captain—Whence camest thou, and whither goest thou?

Jonah—I have come from Zebulun to escape from the Lord God, because He would have me go and cry against the wickedness of Nineveh.

Captain—And what shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? For the storm is heavy, and we all must perish.

Jonah (wringing his hands)—Take me up and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you; for I know that because of me this great tempest is upon you.

Captain (falling on knees)—We beseech Thee, O Lord, we beseech Thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood; for Thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased Thee. (They lead Jonah away.) [CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—THE KING'S PALACE IN NINEVEH.

(Arrange as elaborately as possible, with rugs and draperies. The king is upon the throne, with guards on each side. Jonah stands down in front.)

King—Behold, O prophet of the Lord God, what has brought thee into my presence?

Jonah (bowing)—O mighty king, ruler of this great city, I have come at the command of God.

For, a period of some weeks ago, as I dwelt in my house in Zebulun, the Lord appeared unto me, calling me to come unto Nineveh, that I might warn the people of their wickedness.

But I rebelled against the call of the Lord and fled by ship toward Tarshish. Then a mighty storm overtook us and we were nigh unto perishing.

So did the captain come unto me and ask: "What hast thou done that this curse has come upon us? Call upon thy God, so that we perish not."

Then, in my misery, I bade them cast me into the sea, for I knew that because of me was the tempest upon them.

Now, O king, the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow me, and I was inside the fish three days and three nights. And I prayed unto the Lord from inside the fish. Then did the fish cast me out upon the dry land.

And God spake unto me again, saying: "Arise, go unto Nineveh, and preach unto it the warning that I bid thee." So I obeyed the call and came unto the city.

And as I drew nigh a day's journey, I cried: "In forty days Nineveh shall be overthrown, for the Lord has spoken it."

And when the inhabitants heard me, they brought me unto thee, O king, that thou mightest hear.

King—Woe, woe, woe is come upon us because of our sins! But thou art a true prophet of the Lord God, and unto Him will we incline our ears.

Therefore will I, the king of Nineveh, proclaim a fast, and all my people shall put on sackcloth, and sit in ashes. And we will cry mightily unto God. And we will turn from our evil ways.

Then may it come to pass that God will turn and repent from His fierce anger, that we perish not.

Jonah—If ye pray unto Him, He will hear thee.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE IV.—OUTSIDE THE CITY WALL.

(Solid background, with gate in center, if desired. Jonah enters from left and kneels in prayer.)

Jonah—O Lord, was not this my saying when I was yet in my own country? Therefore I fled unto Tarshish, for I knew that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and that Thou hast repented of the evil against Nineveh. Therefore, O Lord, take my life from me, I beseech Thee, for it is better for me to die than to live.

Angel (who has entered during prayer)—Jonah, my servant, why art thou angry? Should I not spare

Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six-score thousand persons that can not discern between their right hand and their left hand?

Jonah—O Lord, my God, forgive the anger of Thy servant, I pray Thee. Never more shall I rebel against Thee, for Thy mercy is great above the heavens, and Thy truth reacheth unto the clouds.

[CURTAIN.]

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